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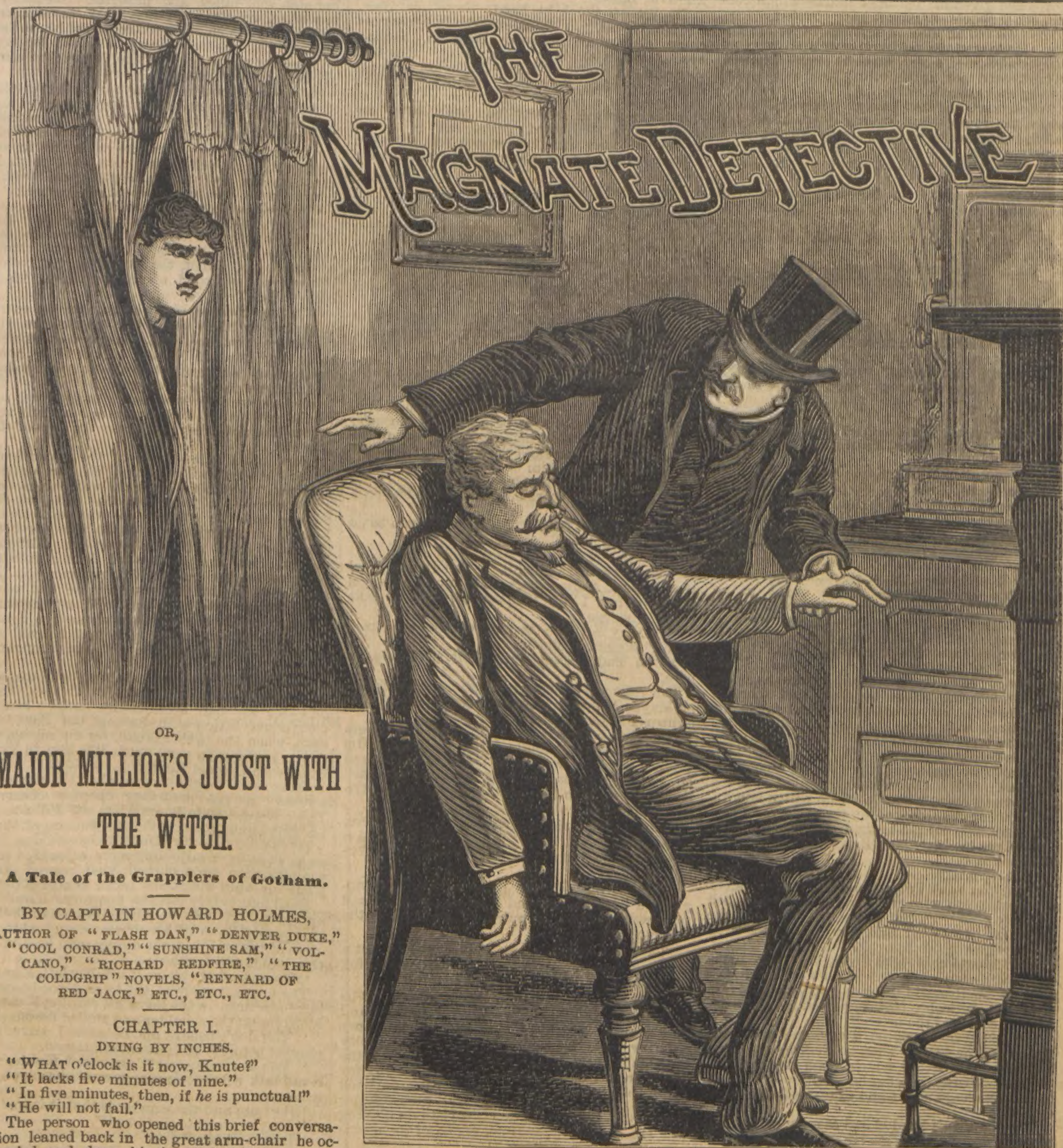
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OR,
**MAJOR MILLION'S JOUST WITH
THE WITCH.**

A Tale of the Grapplers of Gotham.

BY CAPTAIN HOWARD HOLMES,
AUTHOR OF "FLASH DAN," "DENVER DUKE,"
"COOL CONRAD," "SUNSHINE SAM," "VOL-
CANO," "RICHARD REDFIRE," "THE
COLDGRIP" NOVELS, "REYNARD OF
RED JACK," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

DYING BY INCHES.

"WHAT o'clock is it now, Knute?"

"It lacks five minutes of nine."

"In five minutes, then, if he is punctual!"

"He will not fail."

The person who opened this brief conversa-
tion leaned back in the great arm-chair he oc-
cupied and drew his invalid's blanket closer
round his wasted form.

A PAIR OF GLEAMING EYES, IN A FACE WHITE AS MARBLE, WERE FIXED UPON THE
LIVING DOCTOR AND DEAD PATIENT.

He was a man apparently fifty, though his hollow cheeks and sunken eyes made him look much older. The ravages of the disease that had brought him to the portals of the tomb, were seen in his skeleton hands as well as elsewhere. Mayne Malcolm had been dying for three months, yet he was still in the land of the living and had full possession of his faculties.

A part of him had been dead for some time. His lower limbs had lost all sense of touch and feeling, and the doctors said that the deadening power was creeping upward, and would soon still the feebly beating heart.

All his wealth, and he was supposed to have more than his share, was powerless to keep back the march of the destroyer.

When he had asked his attendant about the time, and was told that it lacked five minutes of nine, he shut his eyes for a moment and remained silent.

The glowing fire in the grate shone on his ghostly face, which the male nurse, watched with a smile from a position near the medicine table.

Almost immediately the patient dropped off into a doze; seeing which the attendant stole from the room and Malcolm was left alone.

The five minutes seemed to pass quickly, and then a door at Malcolm's left opened without the slightest noise, and a new face appeared.

It was the face of a young man, but such a face.

Like the one in the chair, it was pinched and white. Its owner could not have been more than twenty-three, but certain dealings with the world had given his features marks which certain other people would not have coveted.

His eyes fell at once on the sleeper before the fire. He looked the sick man over and over before he advanced a step, then he came forward on tiptoe and took up Malcolm's hand as a doctor feeling his patient's pulse.

"You don't die fast enough, Malcolm," murmured the young man, looking down at the invalid; "why can't you oblige us by settling your earthly affairs and getting out of the world? You don't know what courtesy is. By Jove! if I—"

The opening of Malcolm's eyes at this moment broke the sentence, but the youth did not drop the hand he had raised.

"It must be ten o'clock, Basil," he began, seeming to recognize the young man.

"It has just struck the hour."

"And you are punctual! Good! My boy, where is Knute?"

"He is out, sir."

"And—and—"

"The colonel, do you mean?"

A shudder of aversion was the response.

"No, not *that* man!" exclaimed Malcolm.

"I was going to ask about Janet. Is she in the house?"

"I think not; but—"

"Never mind," interrupted the sick man.

"So that we are alone, Basil, my boy, that is enough."

"We are alone," was the reply.

Malcolm put forth one of his skinny hands and held it between his eyes and the fire.

"It is almost as clear as glass," he resumed with a smiling glance at his companion. "It seems to me that I can see the blood grow thinner and less in quantity. I don't care what Doctor Downly says. I know that I am in the grip of a secret disease which ought to be analyzed in the police courts and not in a doctor's laboratory. They call it—ha, ha! what is the strange medical term, Basil?"

"I forget," answered the young man.

"Well, we'll let it go," smiled Malcolm. "Doctor Downly says that my blood has lost its color. My father's died before he died, and there is a tradition that my great-grandfather sat in his chair like I sit in mine, and saw his hands become transparent like that! Look, Basil; the blood is all out of them now!"

It was a strange sight to see the man hold his bloodless hands between his companion and the fire and call his attention to them with a laugh.

The young man, looked at the sight for a moment and then turned to the invalid.

"Get me the little box, Basil," suddenly ordered Malcolm.

"Where is it?"

"Ha! you don't know; that's a fact. I never did intrust you with the secret. Draw my bed from the wall, foot-end foremost. Then, in the wall itself, if you will look sharp, and just back of where my head lies, you will find a button. Press it gently and take from the little niche which will open a box which you will find there."

A sudden gleam in the eyes that regarded him told that Malcolm had imparted a very important secret to the listener.

The young man moved away and drew the bed out as directed. Then he went to the head and found the button which, upon pressure, revealed a concealed niche that contained a small box. This he took out and examined with great curiosity.

The sick man's hand closed eagerly on the box when it was placed in his lap. His eyes got a flash of mingled triumph and delight.

"As I have said, Basil, my boy, when I am dead I want my case investigated by the secret

police, not by the doctors, mind," he went on, looking up into Basil's eyes, which were riveted on the box. "I have started the examination, but I have not advanced very far. One cannot do much in my case. But, first, give me the tonic. It sends the blood back for a time, Basil. After awhile, all the tonics in the world cannot move a drop.

The attendant went to the medicine table, and took up a small bottle from which he poured a reddish liquid into a wine-glass.

As he leaned over the table, he took a vial from an inner pocket, and dropped several drops of its contents into the tonic.

His movements were quick and stealthy, and a second had not elapsed ere he was bearing the drug across the room to Malcolm.

The patient caught the glass with eagerness, and drank off its contents with a relish.

Handing it back empty to Basil, his eyes snapped under the influence of the medicine, and he said with a hollow laugh:

"I wonder where Doctor Downly gets his blood-warmer, Basil? It goes through one's veins like fire, but when it dies out I feel myself one step nearer the end. Now, look here!"

The little box opened with a click as Malcolm spoke, and Basil saw that it was well-filled with papers.

"You've been faithful to me, my boy," continued Malcolm. "There are some people whom I would not trust. They won't shed any tears over Mayne Malcolm. No! They are watching him like a lot of harpies now, and he isn't dying soon enough for them. Don't you know it, Basil?"

The listener shook his head.

"No? Well, you think everybody honest because you are," resumed Malcolm, smiling again. "I wish they were, Basil. This box contains the wealth of Mayne Malcolm. It contains more than that, boy. It must fall into the hands of a certain man, who will call at this house within twenty-four hours after my death. You will stand guard till he comes. When he comes he will approach you, and say: 'The treasure of your master,' and you will give him the box."

Young Basil bowed.

"That is all. Now take the box back. I only wanted to instruct you as to your duty."

The metallic lid of the casket closed with a snap, and Basil found it once more in his hands.

When he moved toward the wall again Malcolm turned in his chair so as to watch him, and the young man restored the box to its place and made everything as secure as before.

"How will I know the gentleman of whom you have spoken?" asked Basil, coming back to the man in the chair.

"By the manner of his inquiry," was the prompt rejoinder. "No one else will come."

"Is he your legal adviser?"

"Jupiter Jowl, eh? No, no!" cried Malcolm. "He is another person altogether. By the way, has Jupiter Jowl been here since he drew up the papers which Salome and the colonel witnessed?"

"I have not seen him in the house."

"Do you know where his office is?"

"Yes. I went there once for you, you recollect."

"So you did, Basil. Well, I want you to go thither again."

"Now?"

"Now," replied Malcolm. "Tell Jupiter Jowl that I want those papers. He took possession of them, but I am the proper party to take them in charge."

"He may not give them up without a written order," suggested Basil.

"You shall have that. Roll the table up here."

The young man obeyed, and the skeleton hands of Mayne Malcolm took writing materials from a drawer in one side.

If he was considered a dying man his fingers moved the pencil rapidly across the sheet. His vitality seemed a wonder to the man who looked on, and when he had finished the order he folded it and placed it in the youth's hands with a triumphant smile.

"Come back right away—with the papers, remember!" said he. "Wait! drop this into a letter-box as you go down. I had almost forgotten it."

Malcolm drew from beneath his dressing-gown a letter sealed and stamped, which Basil put away without so much as glancing at the superscription.

The following moment the room had but a single occupant again, and he was the dying Malcolm.

"One faithful among a dozen vultures," he said to himself in audible tones. "The box and its contents will pass into the hands of my avenger when he comes. Then let the guilty tremble in their guilt. Killed by inches by the secret dagger of the enemies of my house! They think I don't know it. When Basil comes back I'll feed my fire with some valuable fuel. Jupiter Jowl will respect the order. He can do nothing less, though I know that he is one of the meanest money-hawks in New York!"

Mayne Malcolm folded his hands and shut his eyes as he began to wait for the young man he

was never to see again, and for once in his life at least he had confided a momentous secret to a serpent.

CHAPTER II.

SALOME THE DARK.

MAYNE MALCOLM had his secrets. For twenty years the large, old-fashioned house in which he dwelt had been his home. He took possession of it one day without any preliminaries to announce his coming, and within its walls he had taken care of his supposed enormous wealth with few visitors and fewer relatives.

At the date of our story, and for some time prior thereto, the doors of the house had swung open to several persons besides Doctor Downly and Lawyer Jowl.

Basil Belfort had become Malcolm's private secretary. He had been recommended by a stately-looking gentleman, of forty-five, who, although rejoicing in the name of Naseby Yolan, was commonly called "the colonel." He, came frequently to Malcolm's house, and the one person there who did not like him from the start and who eyed him rather suspiciously always said to herself that he was a thorough schemer who always looked out for "number one."

The other inmates of the Malcolm house were Janet, a young girl—known sometimes as the Malcolm Waif—and Knute, the man nurse. Besides these there sometimes called with Colonel Nolan a woman named Salome.

She was a tall, graceful-looking creature with a dark olive complexion and a fine black eye. Her hands were soft and faultless in shape, and her step was quick and noiseless. She seemed to wield a mysterious power over Malcolm, for in her presence he appeared to forget his sufferings and his eyes were always studying her as if he were trying to get at the bottom of some mystery by that means.

Salome did not come always with the colonel. Sometimes Malcolm would open his eyes and find the sylph-like figure of the strange woman in a chair in the room. He used to watch her for several minutes before he ventured to announce that he was awake. He loved to study her, but now and then a singular smile would appear at his lips and he would ask himself:

"Tigress or dove? Which?"

But, of late, he had nearly concluded that Salome was more tigress than dove, and his attentions to her had been less marked, much to the joy of Janet, the beautiful girl, whose history was wrapped up in the words "Malcolm's Waif."

Who was Salome, and why had she the *entree* to Malcolm's house along with the big man with the heavy mustache, who was supposed by some to be her husband? Nobody outside of the house itself seemed to inquire into this family mystery and Mayne Malcolm, deserted by all but the few who were interested in his money, was left to die by inches with a strange malady that drained him of his blood under the eyes of Dr. Downly.

Janet had a room on one of the upper floors. It had been hers a long time. She was a girl of nineteen, who did not like the way things were going about the premises. She did not like Salome and the colonel; she was suspicious of Knute, the nurse, and for Jupiter Jowl, the lawyer, she had a positive aversion. Although she had been Malcolm's ward from a time beyond which her memory did not run, she had never become his confidante. He had never taken her on his knee and told her anything about himself; he sometimes seemed to regard her with feelings akin to actual hatred, and more than once the young girl had thought of going away.

Basil Belfort, with his pale, hatchet face, was by no means good-looking in Janet's eyes. Once or twice she had accidentally caught him in close conversation with Salome, the Dark, and once, when she was abroad for an airing, she saw a young man very much like him in a carriage with Colonel Nolan.

Janet was in the house when the scenes described in the preceding chapter occurred. There were certain hours when she did not enter Malcolm's room, and this was one of them.

It was the time for Knute to be on duty, and, as he slept in an adjoining room, separated from the sick man by a curtain that moved noiselessly on ivory rings, she never ventured down.

Basil had barely left the house ere Knute reappeared. He was at Malcolm's chair before that person knew of his presence, and when the eyes of the two met, the dying man held up his thin hands and laughed:

"There isn't six hours of vitality left, Knute!"

The nurse, a man of thirty and good-looking but for a drop in the lid of his right eye, tapped Malcolm on the shoulder and smiled derisively.

"You don't believe me because I have prophesied before?" the patient continued.

"You are living yet!" answered Knute, who could talk without any apparent motion on his lips.

"So I am and the wonder is that it is so."

"Do you want to go to bed?"

"Is it my hour?"

"It is."

"I sha'n't go now. I have an engagement."

But, I tell you, Knute, that this time, the prophecy of Malcolm is to be fulfilled. Six hours is the limit. You need not go, for Doctor Downly. His tonic has lost its power. You may retire. I heard you say yesterday that you would like an hour of your own to-night. Have you taken it?"

"I have not, but—"

"Under the circumstances you don't feel like doing so, eh?" smiled Malcolm. "Take it, Knute. An hour out won't hurt either of us. I will be here when you come back."

"If you insist—"

"That's just what I do," interrupted Malcolm. "I want to be alone anyhow."

With a searching look at his face, the nurse drew back, but ere he went away he moved the little medicine-table within reach of the patient's chair. Malcolm smiled his thanks and leaned back in his seat while his eyes seemed to study the grate full of coals that imparted such a genial warmth to the room.

Knute drew the curtains together after him, but the next moment he parted them slightly and watched Malcolm for a few seconds with the eye of a hawk.

He saw the sick man studying the fire which every now and then cast his hollow features in new shades of coloring, but, all the time, he did not stir in his chair.

"I guess I can go to the council now," remarked the nurse to himself, and gliding across the room he let himself out of the house and hurried off down the street.

At the first corner he boarded a passing car and rode on the rear platform for some minutes, then left it suddenly and disappeared.

A few steps from the spot where he left the car he was admitted to a house, where he was greeted familiarly by the woman who had opened the door.

"Are all here?" inquired Knute, as he was about to pass into a room at one side of the hall.

"No. Both Mr. Jowl and Basil are out yet. You will find the colonel in there. Go in."

Mayne Malcolm's nurse opened the door and stepped into a large, well-furnished room, in which sat Colonel Nolan, the sick man's visitor, and Salome's companion.

Salome, who had admitted Knute, followed, and took a seat.

"How is he now?" asked Nolan, blowing a cloud of smoke from his mouth preparatory to speaking.

"He's been prophesying again," laughed Knute.

"What is the limit now?" broke in Salome, her eyes seeming to catch fire from the nurse's announcement.

"Six hours."

Salome took out her watch.

"From what time?" she queried, glancing at Knute.

"Say from half-past ten."

Both the colonel and Salome reflected a moment.

"By half-past four, if the death prophecy does not fail, we will have scored the important point!" cried the woman.

"But it will fail," put in Nolan, a frown settling over his face. "I'm losing faith in the secret philter of the mythical begum. I could have done better myself."

Salome colored. Quitting her chair she came to Colonel Nolan's side and looked down into his face, a second, without speaking. Knute watched the pair, but more particularly the woman, for she was the more striking.

"So you doubt?" said Salome. "You always doubt. You will claim the victory when it comes; that is your nature. If you can do better, why haven't you finished the game before this? Your hands are big, but they have been withheld. You have been alone with him fifty times. You want to grasp the millions he owns, yet you want me to do all the work. When do you expect to play, let me ask?"

Nolan at first regarded the speaker with a sneer, but as she proceeded it vanished, and he watched her breathless and in fear.

"You are lying in wait to crush the waif if she threatens to give us trouble, are you?" Salome went on, the sneer on her own lips now. "The Nubian lion is crouching for the gazelle, I see. You will never get to spring, colonel, for the moment he dies, Janet, the waif passes out of the game. You know what Jupiter Jowl holds. We signed the papers in his presence."

"So we did, Salome, my princess; but, what if Malcolm should live to revoke the papers?"

"Live? He can't!" cried the woman, grasping the colonel's shoulder. "Why, he hasn't got a drop of pure blood in him. Doctor Downly says so. He now says that six hours will finish him. You know what report Knute has just brought."

Before Nolan could reply more people were admitted, and Basil Belfort and a slim man with a sleek-looking face appeared in the room. The smooth man was Jupiter Jowl, the lawyer.

Basil advanced to the table and caught Salome's eye.

"He's done the very thing we wanted him to withhold," he began.

"What is that?" cried the woman.

"He's sent for the papers in Mr. Jowl's safe." Salome sprung forward and clutched the lawyer with both hands.

"Keep them! keep them!" she shouted.

CHAPTER III.

DEAD AT LAST.

"Of course I shall keep them," answered Lawyer Jowl, looking the excited woman in the face. "I hope you don't suspect we are going to give up papers worth a fortune, eh?"

"I thought not. He has prophesied that six hours from half-past ten to-night constitute the limits of his earthly existence—"

"He's done that before," cut in the man of the law. "I don't go much on Malcolm's prophecies of death, but he would oblige interested parties if he would close his accounts and get out of the way. Isn't this a patent fact, colonel?" And Mr. Jowl laughed out of his little eyes and rubbed his hands unctuously as he looked at Nolan.

"To be sure it is," snapped the colonel, glancing at Salome. "But I'm not much impressed with the prophecy. So he wants the papers, does he? Sent Basil after them, I suppose?"

"That's exactly what he did."

"How did he come to do it, boy?"

Colonel Nolan had turned to Malcolm's private secretary, who was ready to talk.

Basil, in reply, gave an account of his last conversation with the victim of the League and finished by taking from his pocket the letter which Malcolm had intrusted to him for deposit in a letter-box.

Salome bent forward at sight of the missive, and held out her hand with eagerness.

"To whom is it addressed? Let me see?" she cried.

Basil Belfort handed her the letter.

"Oh, I see it has been opened," continued Salome.

"Yes, I did it—steamed it neatly, and did the job up brown," grinned Mr. Jowl. "I look upon every act of his as being highly important just now; therefore I took the liberty of opening the letter."

By this time Salome was reading the superscription before her.

"It is addressed to Marl Mortiboy Esq., No. 1262 O—Avenue, City," said she, and then she looked inquiringly at the four men.

"Who is Marl Mortiboy?" she asked with a puzzled smile.

"I happened to know," replied the lawyer. "I had him for a client once, but, unfortunately I did not have the pleasure of keeping him long."

"Not long enough to bleed him, eh?" laughed Nolan.

"But who is he?" cried Salome, impatiently.

"He is a man who leads a retired life, with plenty of money. He is sometimes called Major Million on account of his wealth, and because he once held a command in the army."

"But what does Malcolm want with him?" and Salome's fingers dived into the envelope as she put the question with a look of anxious inquiry.

"The queer part of it is that the letter gives us no information on that score," was the response. "It's a regular riddle to me."

"It contains nothing but a slip of paper—a newspaper cutting," added Basil, as Salome relieved the envelope of its contents.

The eyes of the queen of the plot showed her disappointment as she opened the paper in the presence of all.

"It is an old clipping from the looks of it," said she.

"But what is it?" inquired Colonel Nolan.

"Look for yourself. You may be an interested party," and the paper fluttering from Salome's hand fell on the table in front of the colonel.

He pounced upon it like a hawk on a dove and soon had it before his face.

"Ho!" he exclaimed, changing color twice in two seconds. "Did you find this in an envelope addressed by Mayne Malcolm to Major Million?" he went on.

"We did," replied Basil.

Salome's face grew bright with a look of triumph.

Nolan turned to the paper and read the headlines to himself:

"NEWS AT LAST!"

TIDINGS FROM THE OCEAN WING.

LOST WITH ALL ON BOARD."

Nolan seemed to linger over the lines at the top of the clipping. He could have read the whole piece in two minutes, but he did not.

He threw it angrily from him, and laughed when he caught Salome's eye.

"Is that all?" he exclaimed.

"Isn't it enough if Malcolm suspects, and if this Major Million is to come into the game?" was the retort.

"Tell me all you know about him!" commanded Nolan, whirling upon Jupiter Jowl.

"About Marl Mortiboy?"

"Yes. Where did he get his money?"

"I don't know."

"How does he spend it?"

"He isn't my client—"

"And you can't tell, eh?"

"I guess that's it."

"Doesn't he do anything at all?" persisted Nolan.

"They say he takes an interest in mysterious murder cases and the like, does it just from choice, I hear."

"You hear so?" inquired the colonel at once, strangely interested in the person about whom he was asking. "Do you know that he does this?"

"I've heard of one case at least."

"How did he succeed?"

"He came out ahead."

"Won it, eh?"

"Yes."

"Did his vast wealth play any part in the chase?"

"It did."

"He hired the best detectives to be had, did he?"

"He did not hire any one."

"What then?"

"He was his own detective."

"The man with the millions?"

"Yes, sir."

Colonel Nolan sent another glance toward Salome, who, calm but deeply interested, was paying close attention to Jupiter Jowl's replies.

"Now, sir," resumed Nolan, taking a long breath, with the legal shark still in the witness-box; "do you know that Mayne Malcolm and this millionaire ferret have ever met?"

"I cannot say."

"What do you know?"

Nolan had launched his last inquiry at Basil Belfort.

"I know nothing."

Considerably nonplused, Nolan picked up the envelope and studied the address for a few moments.

"Not acquainted, but Malcolm sends a certain clipping to our Monte Cristo shadow!" he mused aloud. "And he says that his strange disease shall be investigated in the police courts and not in the chemist's laboratory. He told you so, I believe, Basil?"

"He did."

"And he also showed you a metallic box which will be called for by some one within twenty-four hours after death?"

Basil bowed.

"Then, by heavens! we must look after this Major Million!" cried Nolan, striking the table with his fist. "I wish we had got upon his trail sooner, but never mind. We will make up for lost time from now on. If I thought that Malcolm's death prophecy would be fulfilled, we would keep the newspaper cutting; but as he has failed so often, perhaps we had better let it go. Take it and seal it up, Jowl. You're good in such matters. What do you say, madam?"

Nolan's eyes were fastened on Salome while he spoke.

The woman had not uttered a word for several minutes.

"As to the paper, send it on," she answered promptly. "Malcolm knows the person to whom he has addressed it. I have heard of this Monte Cristo."

"You?" cried the colonel falling back in his chair.

"I know something of him," continued Salome.

"And never whispered it to me?"

"I did not think it necessary. I never dreamed that Malcolm knew him."

"Is he the dangerous man in the play?"

"No," smiled Salome, showing her pretty teeth. "Major Million, as he is called, can be followed with ease. His wealth makes a figure of him ingenuity cannot hide. I don't fear these amateur detectives. They never untangled any skeins."

"But the man who is to call for the box after Malcolm's death," insisted Nolan. "May not he be Marl Mortiboy?"

"What if he should be the Monte Cristo Vidocq?" cried Salome. "He does not have to find any box."

"Sure enough," was the response. "Salome, my friend, you should have lived in the days of the Medici."

"Or in the times of the Borgias," muttered Jupiter Jowl with his gaze riveted on the brilliant woman though not for a good round sum, and money was his Baal, would he have uttered the opinion aloud.

"Coming back to the papers which Malcolm seeks to recover from your hands," Salome continued, turning to Jupiter Jowl. "They must not leave your safe. Malcolm wants to feed his fire with them. The time has come to strike. Basil must not go back to his master till after the expiration of the six hours. I will go."

"You? To-night?" exclaimed Colonel Nolan.

"I! Now!"

Salome stepped into an adjoining chamber and in a few minutes came forth arrayed for a journey through the streets.

"You left him in the chair, Basil?" she asked.

"Yes."

"And he was still there when you came away, Knute?"

"He was waiting for Basil and the papers."

"Then I will find him there."

In another moment the occupants of the room were four men, Colonel Nolan, Jupiter Jowl, Basil and Knute.

Salome was already on the streets, flitting past the lamps like a specter, and bound for the home of the unfortunate victim of the conspiracy.

It was past midnight, and the thoroughfares of the great metropolis were almost deserted.

Now and then she passed the statuesque figure of a policeman, who looked at her a moment, and turned away unconscious of her errand.

She took no car, because she could not afford to wait on its snail-like movements; but faster than these she went as straight to her destination as the winding streets would admit.

The front of Mayne Malcolm's house was cast in the shadows of night, and Salome glided up the steps with a night-key in her hand.

In a moment she was inside—a ghostly figure in the dimly-lighted hall—and the heavy door had been shut without a particle of noise.

Knowing the interior arrangement of the house, she went to the room occupied by Knute, the nurse. The curtains hung close as he had left them.

Salome parted the heavy folds quietly with her eager hands and looked forward.

The mingled light of lamp and grate pervaded the apartment, and the first object she saw was the figure of Malcolm in his padded chair.

But something riveted Salome's gaze upon him from the first. She stepped forward for a better view, then, in another moment, she was at the chair.

"He did not prophesy falsely this time!" she cried while she stared. "We are on the highway to fortune at last. Mayne Malcolm is dead!"

The set look in the eyes, the strange stare at the ceiling as the head was thrown back, and the clasped hands told the awful truth.

The victim was dead at last. Salome's eyes filled with victory. "Now for the box in the wall!" she exclaimed. "We must baffle the unknown before he comes. The man who is to call for the treasure must find an empty nest. How implicitly Malcolm trusted Basil all through the game, and how well the youth played his part! We got the secret just in time, as the sequel shows."

She went up to the couch and drew it from the wall, foot end foremost.

It did not take her long to get between the head-board and the wall itself, and her searching eyes soon found the button.

Her eager fingers pressed it and opened the secret niche. In an instant her hand was inside.

But all at once she lost every vestige of color, and a cry of mingled horror and surprise leaped from her throat.

Her hand had touched nothing.

The niche was empty!

CHAPTER IV.

DOCTOR AND DETECTIVE.

DOCTOR DOWNLY, who had medical charge of Mayne Malcolm's mysterious case, was accounted one of the fashionable physicians of New York.

He was a sharp-faced, though intelligent-looking man, and his profound attainments in medicine had raised him high in his profession.

He was a widower at the date of the events of our story, that is, he always said that his wife whom he married in Italy died in Rome before he came back to America to settle down, leaving him one child—the young man who was now his student.

Dr. Downly was fifty years of age, and his opinion in regard to certain diseases had given him a reputation envied by many more noted in the profession of medicine than he.

It was early on the morning that followed the eventful night dealt with by the preceding chapters, when a man walked up the steps of the doctor's residence and rung the bell.

It happened that at that very moment Dr. Downly was passing through the front hall on his way to his office, which was in a semi-detached wing of the building, and he turned at the first tinkle of the bell and answered the summons in person.

He gave his visitor a professional "good-morning" while he held the door open for him, though at the same time he bestowed on him more than a common look.

Dr. Downly's caller was a well-dressed, good-looking man, apparently forty-five. He had a well-built frame without any surplus flesh to mar its outlines, and the soft mustache that dropped over his mouth hiding it completely was as dark as his hair.

The doctor led the way to the office without so much as inquiring whether the visit was a business one or not, and when he had ushered his early caller in and closed the door he turned and waited for him to speak.

"I am come to talk about a singular matter," said the stranger, whom Doctor Dowling had already put down for a resident of the city. "My name is Mortiboy."

The physician seemed to recognize the name, for he started agreeably just a little.

"A singular case, eh, Mr. Mortiboy?" echoed the doctor. "You mean singular to yourself I presume, for you may know that the profession might not call it so."

"You are right," smiled Mr. Mortiboy, crossing his legs. "I am not versed in the mysteries of medical science, and that is precisely why I'm here. You have on your list of patients, I am told, a gentleman named Malcolm."

Dr. Downly started again, but not in the same manner as he had before.

He seemed to give Mortiboy a close scrutinizing look while at the same time a look of anxiety gathered in his eyes.

"Yes, I have such a patient on my list," answered he at length after he had seemingly canvassed the situation. "Do you know him?"

The question was too direct to be avoided.

"He is a friend of mine—to a certain extent," added Downly's caller. "His is a perplexing case, is it not?"

Dr. Downly put on a professional air.

"Ahem! do you think it is?" he exclaimed, with a smile. "You are looking at it from a non-professional standpoint I presume."

Mortiboy returned the smile with one that appeared to ridicule the doctor's reserve.

"Just as you think, doctor," he replied. "I am somewhat interested in Mayne Malcolm's case, and as I want to know something—to look beyond the surface as it were—I have come to his family physician. I am able to pay for a professional opinion, for Marl Mortiboy, as you may know, is not a beggar when it comes to possessing something of this world's goods."

"I know that," returned Downly, having made up his mind that his visitor was Mortiboy, the man whose wealth was well known to every intelligent New Yorker. "There shall be no charge—none at all—for any professional opinion I may deliver at this interview."

"Godfound him!" ejaculated Marl Mortiboy, under his breath. "I'm a long time breaking the ice, but I'll have it broken in a moment."

He drew his chair nearer the table and looked straight at the physician.

"You don't object to saying that Mayne Malcolm has been dying for three months?" he asked.

"That's putting it pretty plain."

"Too plain?" retorted Mortiboy.

"Not exactly. Malcolm is a very sick man."

"Sick unto death?"

Dr. Downly seemed to hesitate for a moment, then he broke out, apparently without reserve:

"Yes, sir, he is that sick."

A smile of victory appeared at Mortiboy's mouth.

"How long will he last if he goes steadily down?"

Downly ran his hand over his thin face and through the iron-gray whiskers that framed it.

Without replying, he went to a curtain that hung across one corner of the little office and drew it aside.

Reaching up, he took down from a triangular shelf a small bottle corked and sealed with red wax, which he bore to the table and placed within a few inches of his visitor's hand.

"How long would you expect a man to last whose blood is in that condition?" he asked, looking from the vial to Mortiboy, who was already eying it with intense curiosity.

The millionaire took up the bottle and held it between him and the window for a few seconds without replying.

The vial contained a palish-red liquid which looked like blood largely diluted with water.

He was aware that the eyes of Dr. Downly were upon him.

"If that was my blood," said he, without even taking his eyes from the vial, "I say if that was my life-current, I would think myself beyond the reach of medical science."

"Ha, ha! and so you would be!" laughed Downly. "Well, sir, you hold in your hand some of the late contents of Mayne Malcolm's veins."

Mortiboy replaced the bottle on the table and turned to the speaker.

"I'm going to ask a blunt but a very natural question," he resumed. "What is the matter with your patient?"

Dr. Downly, who had eyed the vial ever since it had been returned to the table, raised his eyes to his visitor's face and smiled broadly.

"I know what you think of my question," continued Mortiboy. "I don't often interfere with a doctor's business. He has secrets which he sometimes shares with his patients, but nearly always he keeps them himself. You are known as a man of science; you have practiced in two countries, and, if I am not mistaken, you have made a certain department of medical science a specialty."

"Ah! then, indeed, I am not wholly unknown to you," answered Doctor Downly, a tinge of sarcasm in his tones.

"Nor is your specialty unknown," pursued Mortiboy quickly. "You have studied the action of strange poisons, you have sought out their influence on the blood, and the fame you gained in Italy in this direction has not been dimmed in New York."

The doctor drew back while he looked at the man across the table.

"This vial contains the blood of Mayne Malcolm, a prominent patient of yours," Mortiboy went on, catching up the bottle and looking at it steadily for a few moments. "It is also the blood of a dying man. It is nearly as clear as water. I presume you are waiting with a doctor's impatience for a chance to prove certain theories of your own with the body of Malcolm on a private dissecting-table?"

Dr. Downly fairly stared at the speaker.

"You think me heartless," he managed to say when Mortiboy broke in quietly:

"You doctors are nearly all alike. I've spent five years of my life among your people. Yes, Doctor Downly, even now you are thinking about dissecting the man who is dying by inches while he is surrounded by every luxury that wealth can procure."

For the first time during the conversation Downly flushed.

"I shall have to curtail this interview if you insist in your course," he replied as he reddened.

"You may take a great interest in Mayne Malcolm, but there is a certain line of information in the matter which I as his physician cannot cross."

"Oh, you think me too curious in a secret of yours—a professional secret!" laughed Mortiboy, not at all taken aback by Downly's words. "But if you won't give me any opinion as to Malcolm's disease, you will, perhaps, render one as to the length of time he is likely to inhabit this world."

"He may be dead now."

"And he may live—"

"A month," finished the physician.

"Which is apt to be nearer the truth?"

"You can take your choice."

Marl Mortiboy did not speak again for a moment.

"When he dies will there be an investigation?" he inquired.

"There may be."

"Conducted by yourself?"

"Yes."

"Entirely separate from any other?"

"Of course," and then the doctor added: "I don't see why there should be any other."

Before Mortiboy could reply, even if he intended to, the bell in the hall tinkled, and the next moment the door was opened by the servant.

Dr. Downly appeared to listen.

"Wait a moment," he said to Mortiboy. "I think I have a message from my patient now," and he left his chair and vanished.

The visitor thus left in the office waited for Doctor Downly's return with a curious smile on his face.

He heard a confused murmur of voices in the hall, but could distinguish nothing.

By and by the door shut and Downly came back. There was a new color in his face; his eyes were beaming with mingled satisfaction and surprise, and crossing the floor between the threshold and table, he caught up the sealed vial and held it in the light.

"This is now the blood of a dead man!" he exclaimed with a look at Mortiboy.

"What! is it all over with your patient?"

"It is. Mayne Malcolm is dead."

"Who brought the news?" asked the millionaire.

"His private secretary—Basil Belfort."

"Who was with him when he died?"

"No one."

Marl Mortiboy left his chair and picked up his hat.

"Now for your scientific inquiry, I presume?" he resumed with a glance at Downly.

"Yes, sir."

"Now also for mine!"

"For yours?" cried the physician.

"Yes, for mine! I am Mayne Malcolm's detective! My time has come to take a hand in this game!"

CHAPTER V.

THE TIGRESS SHOWS HER TEETH.

NEED it be said that Darius Downly fell back with an exclamation of profound astonishment and then proceeded to stare at his visitor who had spoken his last words with provoking coolness?

He would not have been more astonished if the ceiling overhead had opened to let a bomb-shell fall on the table. He had heard of Marl Mortiboy, he knew him for a man who rolled in luxury with his immense riches, but he had not dreamed that he would turn detective.

Several seconds passed before Doctor Downly recovered his speech.

"Very well," answered he at length. "I am not the man to say what shall or shall not be done, but I did not know that you ever took much interest in the mysterious."

"Just as if a man with my money should be content to lie by it, nothing more, eh, doctor?"

The physician could very readily have returned an affirmative, but thought best not to do so.

"You will excuse me, Mr. Mortiboy," he replied. "Under the circumstances, though I can do my late patient no good, I deem it my duty to go to the house at once."

As he finished he took out his watch and consulted it for a second.

"I think I will go there myself, but not just now," remarked Major Million.

"I will lay no straw in your way," smiled the doctor, "and I ask in return that you place none in mine. It is a bargain, sir?"

"Yes, sir," cried the Magnate Detective, putting out his hand. "I shall sift this matter to the bottom—"

"What matter?" interrupted the doctor.

"The death of Mayne Malcolm, the plot for his money, the cool play for millions!"

"I do not understand. You are getting too deep for me."

Marl Mortiboy gave Dr. Downly a searching look which he stood without changing color.

"Do you think everything is square in Malcolm's house?" he asked.

"I have yet delivered no opinion either professional or otherwise."

"Well, good-morning, doctor," he suddenly continued. "We do not seem to understand each other as well as we might; the future may bring about something better. Don't think that I have done nothing more than clip coupons and collect rents. You have not kept your nose upon the grindstone of practice all your life. Ah no, doctor. But, let me say good-morning again, this time for good."

Major Million's manner effectually silenced all response, and the doctor found himself alone.

He was some time recovering his equanimity; then he carried the vial of blood back to the curtained niche, and put on his hat.

"Lorain left this for you," said a voice behind him.

The doctor turned with a start.

A cheery girl with black eyes and red cheeks was standing in the office, and her fingers held a bit of folded paper, in shape like a common hastily-folded note.

Lorain was Dr. Downly's son and student.

"When did he leave it, Annabel?" asked the doctor, as he took the paper.

"Last night when he went out; about ten, I think it was."

"Has he been back since?"

"No, sir."

By this time the physician had opened the note, and the first glance at its contents sent the blood to his temples. The crimson flush Annabel saw ere she turned away.

This is what Dr. Downly read:

"I can't keep my hands out of this diabolical affair any longer. It is simply infamous, and your silence, when you know so much, is the height of shame. I am going to put some shrewd detective on the trail of the guilty—I don't care where the blow falls! You claim to be my father, but I prefer not to be the son of a man who will conceal a crime, the equal of which this city of evil deeds has never seen."

LORAIN."

The note actually trembled in the physician's hands, and he seemed to take in a breath of relief when he looked round and found that Annabel was gone.

Refolding the writing, he placed it in an inner pocket, after which he drank off a glass of sherry and took his departure.

Basil Belfort had had ample time to get back to the house of death, so when the doctor walked up the steps and rung the bell, the door was opened by Basil himself.

"Aha! you are ahead of me!" smiled Downly.

"I was detained a few minutes in my office, but there was no urgency. We doctors have to do with the living as a general thing. Where is my late patient?"

"Where you saw him last," was the reply.

Dr. Downly passed into the cosy bedroom of Mayne Malcolm's residence. He had been there a hundred times since the first discovery of the fatal malady.

The room looked the same as ever, but the figure leaning back in the padded chair had an appearance which was no longer natural.

"We thought best to leave him as he was found," said Knute Knelson, the nurse, coming out from behind the curtains which separated his cot from the patient's.

Downly advanced and looked steadily at Malcolm for a moment.

"So he died where he is?" he queried, with a glance at Knelson, who was looking on with folded arms.

"Yes."

"That is not strange. Basil told me that no one was present when the change took place."

"That is true so far as we know."

"Where were you?"

"I happened to be out of the room."

Knute thought he did not have to disclose his exact whereabouts.

"Miss Janet I presume was in her own apartment?" continued the doctor.

"I cannot say. The truth is that the young woman has not been seen since last night."

"Then," said the doctor, "she does not know of this?"

"Not unless she came back and discovered it before we did, going away again unobserved."

There was no reply.

The doctor went to some pains to convince himself that his patient was actually dead, and

Knute, as if he thought that he was not needed there, went out and about other duties.

While Downly was at work, the curtain behind him parted and a pair of gleaming eyes, in a face white as marble, were fixed upon the living doctor and dead patient.

Beneath them was a glimpse of a face white as marble and seemingly as hard. It was clearly cut and faultless in contour, though one, if he could have seen its owner under other circumstances, would have thought that it had lost some of its naturalness.

The eyes watched Downly for some time, then the whiteness of the face changed to a darker hue, till the pallor had entirely departed.

At length the curtain was parted wide enough to let a person through and a cat-like foot fall advanced toward Downly.

"Can't you bring him back to life with your science?" asked a voice behind the doctor who whirled as if he had heard a serpent's hiss, and found himself face to face with Salome the Dark!

The smile on her almost fierce face matched the wickedly victorious gleam in her eyes.

For a moment the two looked at one another, with the dead man between them, for the step which Downly took when Salome spoke had brought about this singular tableau.

"I did not know you were in the house," began the doctor.

"I just came," was the reply. "Basil sent a message that all was over at last, and I hastened at once to the house of our friend."

What would Downly have said to this if he had known that the woman before him was the first to discover that Mayne Malcolm was dead?

Salome leaned forward and looked for a second at the set features of the corpse in the chair, and Downly looked at her in a deep study.

He did not seem to know what to make of this woman. He had seen her often enough, had met her at Malcolm's bedside, alone and when Colonel Nolan was present, but here she was again, as bewitching as ever, with her black eyes and dark face, and hands soft enough to look at, but powerful enough to choke one to death!

She had a strange fascination for Dr. Downly while she looked at the dead Malcolm.

Suddenly she looked up, caught his eye and said:

"When will you write out your certificate of death, doctor?"

"There is no need of haste," he answered. "I have been much interested in this case, and I want to either confirm or dissipate certain theories."

"Very well!" she cried, starting forward and catching Downly's wrist. "You don't want to call a council of doctors over our friend Malcolm. Let the tomb have its own without cavil. We want no experiments. The dead is dead! And you ought to be the last man—you, I say, Doctor Downly—to inquire into the cause of this man's death!"

The look that accompanied Salome's words appeared to pierce the doctor like a knife.

"I mean just what I say," she went on, rising to full stature before him, and covering him with her index finger. "You ought to be the last man to propose an inquiry. I should say so—ha, ha! You will give the proper person your death certificate to-day. By the way, I will get writing materials, and you can give it now. Come, don't refuse, doctor. I will call in Basil as a witness. What! you refuse, eh? Then, by the heaven above us, I will put your son Lorain in possession of a very pretty secret!"

Dr. Downly got white, and if he had not clutched the dead man's chair, he would have fallen!

CHAPTER VI.

AT WORK.

THE house at No. 1262 O—avenue was a more pretentious structure than some of its neighbors, and everybody knew it was the abode of Major Million, the somewhat eccentric bachelor moneybags.

"Eccentric," perhaps, because he never permitted the curious to know his exact wealth, and because he minded his own affairs, and did it to the exclusion of all interlopers.

His housemaid was a young woman who sparkled a pair of deep black eyes under the frill of a French cap. She was called Joan, but her name, brief as it was, had been further shortened to Jo, and by the abbreviation she was usually addressed by the major.

By none of the neighbors was it even suspected that Marl Mortiboy took any interest in the mysteries that keep the average detective busy, much less was it suspected that he played ferret himself.

Why should he? A man with several millions at his command had no business risking his life after a paltry reward, when instead of the pay he was likely to get a dagger in the back or join the always lengthening list of missing men.

But for all this, and spite of the opinions of those who knew him best, Major Million was known to a select few as one of the best solvers of detective puzzles in Gotham.

He was at nobody's command.

The police authorities could not assign him to a case; they could only inform him about a mystery and let him act as he pleased.

Sometimes the inspector would hear nothing in reply, and another detective would take up the trail. But oftentimes at the end of it the criminal would be taken from his very hand, as it were, and Major Million would turn him over to justice.

Such, in part, was the man who had informed Dr. Downly in the latter's office that the time had come for him to take a hand in the dark game which had been going on under Mayne Malcolm's roof.

No wonder the revelation fell upon the physician like a thunderbolt. The last man in New York whom he would have set down for a detective was Major Million. He had never heard his patient mention him and Malcolm did not seem to be a man with any secrets. He had never seen the millionaire shadow at the house, and yet he had said that he was the dead man's authorized avenger.

When Marl Mortiboy left Dr. Downly's office after the interview which the reader has just witnessed, he went as straight home as possible.

"Has anybody called, Jo?" he asked of the trim maid whom he encountered in the hall.

"Yes, sir, two persons."

"Two callers this early!" smiled the detective. "Did they leave their cards?"

"The young gentleman did, but the young lady refused to do so when I suggested it."

Major Million passed into the library and picked up a card that lay on the center-table.

"Ho! I wish I had been at home," he exclaimed glancing at the name and address thereon which read:

"LORAIN DOWNLY,
1000 MIDDLE STREET."

Beneath the last line in pencil was the addition:

"Will call again at 6. p. m."

"I'll be here, Mr. Downly," said the detective aloud, tossing the card aside and picking up the only letter the early carrier had delivered.

The envelope bore the city postmark and Mortiboy seemed to study it curiously for several moments.

Then he turned it over and looked closely at the sealing.

"This has been tampered with," he murmured. "It has been steamed and opened by some person or persons who wanted to see what was inside. They did a neat job, too, but not quite neat enough to deceive everybody."

Instead of disturbing the sealing the detective relieved the envelope of its contents by cutting it open at one end. A smile played on his lips as he drew forth a printed slip of paper unaccompanied by a particle of writing and seating himself at the table he began to read it to himself.

"He held this back till the last moment. I suppose the last hunt found it," and Major Million's eyes went back to the paper again. "So the Ocean Wing was thoroughly lost! Not a soul escaped. That was years ago and the account which Mayne Malcolm kept so long is yellow from age. There isn't much here, but it is another link. This cutting supplies the names of three additional passengers. I would have thought that one of them would have been underscored, but it is not. Now, why did the person who opened this letter allow it to pass to me? Whose work was it? Into whose hands did this letter fall after leaving Malcolm? That is to be found out."

The millionaire detective locked the paper and Lorain Downly's card carefully in a drawer at his hand and rung a bell.

In an instant Jo came in in her French cap.

"What was the young lady caller like, Jo?" asked Mortiboy.

"She was about nineteen, with a pretty face, but, then, she did not look her best while here for she was agitated."

"Had she dark blue eyes?"

"Indeed she had and real nice ones they were, too!"

"Was she about your height, Jo?"

"A mite taller perhaps."

"Yes, just a trifle since I come to think of it," replied the New York ferret. "She refused to step into the library and wait for me!"

"She did. When she had done so I suggested that she leave her card, but she said it wasn't necessary, and went away sorely disappointed, I thought, if I am to judge by the way the blue eyes looked."

The identity of his visitor did not appear to puzzle Major Million, but he seemed to regret that she had not waited for him.

"Did she call before the young man came?" he asked.

"She was here almost an hour ahead of him."

As there were no more inquiries, Jo took her leave and the Monte Cristo detective retired to an adjoining room.

When he came forth he picked up his hat and buttoned his fall overcoat to the chin.

Calling the maid to him in the hall, he said:

"I have set the camera in the right place and everything is ready, Jo. When the bell rings you will draw the cord that adjusts the plate

and succeed in taking the caller. No matter who comes, this is to be done."

Jo bowed with her sweetest smile and the next moment the detective was on the street again.

Just half an hour later a man walked up the steps of Mayne Malcolm's house and rung the bell.

The usual insignia of death had already been attached to the door and the caller seemed to study it while he waited for a response to his ring.

He was admitted by a young man who gave him a searching look and in the hall he stopped and asked:

"Are you Mr. Belfort, the private secretary?"

"No, sir, I am Mr. Malcolm's late nurse."

"Where is Mr. Belfort?"

"In the library."

"I wish to see him."

"Your name, please."

"Julius Jarroway," and at the same time the speaker handed the nurse a card with the name engraved thereon.

Looking from the man to the card and back again, Knute Knelson hurried away followed by Mr. Jarroway, who appeared anxious to keep him in sight.

"A gentleman, sir," said Knute, to the young man whom he disturbed at a small table covered with papers and at the same time he presented the card, which was hardly necessary for he had its owner at his heels.

Basil Belfort looked startingly at the man who had come. He changed color from red to white, but soon got the red back again.

"I am Mr. Jarroway," confirmed the strange gentleman, who was buttoned to the chin in a dark-brown fall coat, and at the same time he advanced upon Basil and lowered his voice.

"The treasure of your master!" he continued.

In an instant Malcolm's private secretary fell back and looked at Jarroway while his lower jaw dropped.

"Ah! you must understand," resumed the caller. "I am here according to agreement and within twenty-four hours after your master's death."

By this time Belfort had recovered his composure, and his nerves were nerves of steel.

A thought of Salome's anger had brought him to his senses.

"There must be a mistake somewhere," he remarked, to Jarroway. "Mr. Malcolm died unexpectedly to us all and I certainly know nothing about any treasure that was to have been delivered to any one after his death. I am sure he left no orders of the kind with me."

Julius Jarroway looked searchingly at Basil for a moment, and then glanced at the table.

"It is rather singular," he went on in a suddenly assumed off-hand manner. "The deceased was to have left orders with his private secretary for the delivery to me of a package after his death."

"I know nothing of it, sir," broke in Basil, catching sight of Knute Knelson in the hall, with a pair of tigerish eyes fastened on Jarroway. "I am very sorry that you have been disappointed."

"Well, never mind. The matter may not be worth bothering about," replied the visitor.

"When does the burial occur?"

"To-morrow, at ten."

"From the house?"

"From the house."

The next moment Basil was bowing Julius Jarroway to the door, and when he had dismissed him he sprang back and caught the arm of the man waiting for him in the hall.

"What say you now?" he exclaimed.

"It is he!" was the quick reply. "That man is the detective who is to spoil everything if he can."

"Major Million?"

"Yes, the money-bags ferret—the man who can spend a million on this hunt, and then not impoverish himself! We could not have given up the treasure even if we were disposed to do so, for somebody had stolen it when Salome looked in the niche. Now we have to kill this shadow or lose the play."

Basil dropped Knute Knelson's arm.

"Follow him! Not go to Salome!" he cried.

"Let no grass grow under your feet, for we must balk him at the outset. Tell her all that has occurred, and obey her orders to the letter. If it is kill, kill!"

"I'm ready for anything!" answered Knelson, his face growing suddenly dark around his cruel eyes.

"Then, go at once."

Basil Belfort went back to the table, while the shutting of a door proclaimed Knute Knelson's departure.

"We might have matched him here. There were two of us," he suddenly exclaimed. "Knute stood behind him, waiting for the signal—But then we might have failed, and failure would have meant disaster."

CHAPTER VII.

A FATAL BLUNDER.

"WELL, Jo, whom have you caught?"

Major Million put this inquiry to the pretty maid in the French cap the moment he opened

his own door and caught sight of Joan in the hall.

There was a smile of victory on the clever girl's face.

"I have something for you to look at, at any rate," answered the girl, leading the way to the library. "You had been gone about two hours when the bell rung. I knew who was on the step by the ring, and I dropped the plate as you directed before I opened the door. When I was ready, I replied to the bell, and on the stone stood the young woman who called this morning and refused to leave her card. Here she is. Don't you think I'm making rapid strides in hallway photography?"

As she finished, the French maid produced a negative plate, which the detective took up with eagerness, and proceeded to hold in a position that brought out the face thereon.

"Just as I suspected!" he exclaimed. "You have done admirably, Jo; you caught her, blue eyes and all."

The girl blushed and smiled, well pleased with the compliment.

Major Million continued to look at the picture a few moments longer, when he laid it down on the velvet covering of the center-table.

"You know her, don't you?" said the servant.

"Yes, that is I know where she belongs. What did she say this time?"

"She did more than talk, though she was gone in a minute," replied Jo. "She left a card, which she did not do before, you know. She was still greatly excited."

"A card, Jo? Let me have it."

The maid opened a book on the table and took from between its leaves a card which she handed to her master.

The detective saw some dainty penciling on the polished surface, and leaning toward the light, he read:

"JANET."

"For the present at No. 96 1-2 Leaf street. If you come, ask the old lady for 'Leo.'"

Major Million looked up at his maid from the bottom of the card.

"Did she write anything on this card while she was here?" he asked.

"No."

"I see," thought the nabob detective. "She prepared the card beforehand, thinking that I would not be at home. Leaf street is an odd quarter for a girl like Janet to seek. I wonder how she ever came to go thither?"

He was soon alone in the library and in a little while was studying the face Joan had adroitly photographed with a hidden camera while the visitor remained at the door.

And Janet—whoever Janet was—had gone off unconscious that she had been thus taken.

"Now, for Leaf street and No. 96 1/2 in particular," murmured the detective. "I got a pretty fair insight at some things at Malcolm's. The fort is just now held by the enemy, and Doctor Downly has given a certificate that his patient died from natural causes. A short time ago he was anxious to hold a *post mortem*, now he lets them seal the coffin up without so much as a single hint of foul play. This is the deepest plot for millions by the harpies of New York that I ever came across and the police do not suspect."

About an hour later the detective turned into a narrow street and looked at the various numbers till he reached a two-story brick house whose narrowness would have led a stranger to believe that it had been compressed into its dimensions by the large buildings on each side.

Above the door was the number 96-1-2.

The wooden steps creaked under Mortiboy's weight, and he was looking for the knocker when the door opened and he found himself confronted by a woman of sixty in a dingy frilled cap and spectacles.

Major Million walked in without so much as a "by your leave," and when he turned on the woman she was staring at him for his assurance.

"I have called to see Miss Leo, the young lady who is here," began the detective.

"She isn't here now, and never was!" was the sharp retort that took Mortiboy aback. "Besides, sir, I don't answer very civilly people who crowd into my house without giving their names and—"

"That is the gentleman, Mrs. Postlewaite," broke in a voice somewhere, though the detective decided mentally that it came from overhead.

"Oh, just as you say, my dear," replied the old lady. "If he's the gentleman you're looking for, why, I've done my duty."

The next moment footfalls came down the steps, just visible in the darkness of the little hall, and a female figure was seen.

"I am glad to see you," cried the young girl who halted in front of the detective. "I wish it could have been sooner, but never mind. Come up to my room."

Major Million was forthwith conducted upstairs to a plainly furnished bedroom with a low ceiling and dingy side walls, and when his conductress had shut the door behind them she turned on him and continued:

"There is some difference between the

quarters I have now and those I occupied a few hours ago. All the gilding has been taken off my cage by the hand of death. Ah! you must know that *he* is dead."

"Yes, Janet, I know that Mayne Malcolm is out of Doctor Downly's hand. I have just left the house."

The girl gave a quick start.

"And who did you find there?" she exclaimed.

"I left Basil Belfort and Knute Knelson in possession of the house as far as I could see."

"Not the master spirits," resumed the girl.

"If you had been a little sooner you might have seen the queen of the conspiracy—the money witch of New York. I mean Salome," she added, seeing that the detective did not interrupt her. "I wish to Heaven I had never seen the light of day. I dare not expose this viper and her following. I must through fear of my life stand back and let them play their hands out. And yet I wanted to see you. My God! I am the most wretched young woman in this city!"

She clasped her white hands in her lap and trembled.

"You must not fear them, Janet," responded the detective kindly. "You know almost enough to bring the guilty to justice without giving me, Malcolm's detective, much trouble in the matter."

"Are you his avenger?" she asked suddenly, looking up.

"I am."

"When did you become such?"

"It was a month ago when he was apparently feeling so well that he sent Knute Knelson away that I might come."

Janet looked astonished.

"I never knew that you ever entered the house," she observed. "He made you his avenger that night?"

"He did."

"I ought to tell you all I know," she went on. "I had made up my mind to do so, but whenever I think of the soft hands of Salome and of the power of Colonel Nolan and the rest I shrink from my resolution. You did not get the treasure when you went after it?"

The sudden question made the detective start.

"No, it was not there, Janet, and Basil Belfort disclaimed all knowledge of it."

"The infamous liar!" cried the girl, her eyes taking fire from indignant flashes. "I have not been asleep all the time in that house. I have seen and heard more than I dare reveal. I saw Basil take the treasure from its hiding-place at his command. It was but a short time before he died. I heard him tell Basil that within twenty-four hours after his death, some one would come after it, and that he was to hand it over to that party without a question. Basil Belfort promised."

"Well, soon afterward, while he was all alone in his padded chair, a strange tremor passed over him. He tried to rise, but his limbs could not support his body. I wanted to run to his assistance, but fear held me back, and while I looked, spellbound and breathless, he gave up the long struggle with death and conspirators. Some time afterward, having ascertained that I was the only living person in the house I slipped into his room. I went to the wall at the head of his bed, and found the secret button, as Basil had done by his direction. From the niche thus disclosed I took the metallic box and carried it off."

"Brave girl!" cried Major Million. "You have interposed a sword of justice between the law and the conspirators."

"I wish I could think so," answered Janet.

"I wish I could present you with the box."

"What! did you leave it in the house?" cried the detective.

"No, I took it away."

"To have it taken from you in return?"

"To lose it in the strangest manner imaginable," replied Janet, smiling faintly.

"Tell me."

"I hid the box, which is not large, under my shawl," she resumed. "It was not difficult to get out of the house, for, as I have said, no person had come back to discover the true state of affairs there. I was soon several blocks from the spot, and it was my intention to hide both myself and the box somewhere till I could find you. All at once I came upon a sign on which the gaslight shone in a peculiar manner."

"Loan and Safe Company!" were the words I read while I halted. A singular fear seemed to take possession of me. What if I should be followed and robbed of the box? I dared not run the risk."

"In a moment my fears had taken me into the place. I had determined to deposit the box in the vaults of the company for safe-keeping. I made known my wants and the treasure passed out of my hands. With the receipt of deposit in my pocket I came out and hurried away. I did not stop till I had domiciled myself where you see me now. The receipt I had placed carefully in a small seal-skin purse. What, then, was my horror when I discovered that somewhere between the loan-office and Mrs. Postlewaite's, my pocket had been picked?"

"What! picked of the receipt?" cried the detective, starting to his feet.

"Robbed of everything it contained," answered Janet. "I was jostled twice, once on the street and again on the platform of the car. The box is irrevocably lost, for I have forgotten the number and the location of the loan office, but the thief who robbed me has found it ere this."

Major Million looked at the girl without speaking.

She had given utterance to a startling truth. Yes, before then Mayne Malcolm's treasure—the very thing the detective wanted—had passed into unknown hands!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRAIL OF THE BOX.

MARL MORTIBOY, the nabob detective of Gotham, left Janet in a deep study.

He cautioned the girl to remain secluded where she was.

"The conspirators will look for you; they will ransack the city for the person whom they will naturally accuse of having taken the box. Salome will hunt like a tigress, and if you happen to fall into her clutches look out."

This cautioning was not needed to keep the girl at Mrs. Postlewaite's. She understood the situation and was willing to submit everything to the man who had the gang to fight.

She had seen enough of Salome to know her nature. More than once unseen she had watched the dark-faced woman while she eyed Mayne Malcolm dying in his chair with the strange malady for which there was no earthly cure.

Time after time she had caught Knute Knelson bending over the medicine-table when Malcolm was asleep, and she had noticed, too, the sly but eager looks which Colonel Nolan had darted at the patient.

Yes, Janet was willing to keep away from Salome and her friends, and she thought the little house on Leaf street a good place to hide at.

Major Million resolved to find, if possible, the trail of the lost box.

Janet could not locate the loan-office where she had deposited the treasure.

All would have been well if she had not lost the receipt; that unfortunate occurrence seemed to have upset everything.

The girl, in her excitement, had forgotten the route traveled from her former home to Mrs. Postlewaite's.

She had lost her own trail as completely as if she had traveled it blindfolded.

But the detective did not despair.

Half an hour after leaving Janet, he entered a small loan and safe building and approached a young and somewhat dudish young man, seated at a desk in one corner of the office.

"Were you on duty last night at the counter?" asked Major Million.

The young man looked astonished.

"I don't attend the night counter," he replied.

"Mr. Valdemar was on duty, I believe."

"Where is Mr. Valdemar?"

"He is asleep, sir."

"Where does he sleep?"

"Just overhead in this building."

"On the next floor?"

"Yes, sir, but—"

"But what?" queried Major Million, with a smile.

"He isn't in very good humor. We didn't happen to relieve him on time this morning. If you want to see him, and I presume you do, you would do well to let him have his sleep out."

"I can stand a little growling," answered the detective.

The young man gave directions how to reach Mr. Valdemar's room, and settled down to doing nothing again.

Three minutes later the detective rapped at a door above the office.

Janet had given him a brief description of the man who had waited on her and he was certain that he would be able to recognize the right party when found.

He had to knock again and with increased vigor before he heard the slightest sounds beyond the door, and then a growl demanded to know who was there.

The detective replied that a gentleman desired to see Mr. Valdemar on important business, and after some delay, the door was opened and a man half-dressed confronted the city ferret.

The night clerk of the loan office of Give & Take was a man about forty-five. He was far from being good-looking, having a peaked, hatchet-like face sparsely covered with a growth of reddish whiskers, and rather strange eyes.

He looked Major Million over from head to foot as he secretly wondered what his errand could be, and when he had concluded the inspection he pushed the detective a chair but took the edge of his tumbled cot himself.

"Did you do much business last night?" began the Major.

"No, it was very dull—hardly enough doing to keep one awake. By Jove! I believe I did doze sometimes as I haven't slept well since I came off."

"Did you have a young lady customer?"

"Last night?"

"Yes."

"I had—let me see—yes, I had two."

"But one in particular—a girl something like this." And the detective proceeded to give Mr. Valdemar a description of Janet.

"I had a customer of that sort. I recollect now," rejoined the clerk. "She was excited all the time she was in the office. What business did she transact? Oh, she left a package in trust—no, a box, I remember. You have called up the whole circumstance."

"You gave her a receipt?"

"Certainly. We always do that."

"Well, the young girl lost it before she got home."

The clerk at once assumed a sympathetic look.

"I'm sorry, sir. We meet with these little incidents in the course of business. They must be expected, you know."

"You think you remember your young customer?"

"Distinctly. She stands before me now. She was pretty, too, if I don't forget. Devilish nice eyes of the insuaring kind. Relative of yours, eh?"

"No—friend," replied Major Million. "You don't remember the name you wrote in the receipt?"

"The young lady's name, eh?" Mr. Valdemar ran his freckled hand through his reddish hair and reflectively scratched his poll. "I recollect that she did not give her Christian name."

"Her initials only?" broke in the detective.

"Yes, women do that often nowadays. It bothers us a good deal, you see. For instance: if a ticket should be lost and found by a man, he might get the object left in trust, provided he came for it when the clerk who put out the ticket was not on duty."

The nabob shadow started slightly at the clerk's words.

That was the very thing he had to fear.

"Did the young lady say she gave her whole name?" Mr. Valdemar asked.

"She did not."

"Let's go down and see. I'm getting interested in this case."

Major Million sat still while the clerk hurried through with the rest of his toilet, and when it was completed, they went down to the office, where they found the young man in the act of finishing a little business transaction with an old man.

Mr. Valdemar stepped to the desk and took down a huge book, which he opened with eagerness, and rapidly turned the leaves.

Suddenly he looked up with a white, scared face, and caught the detective's eye.

"It's been called for!" he exclaimed. "David, who came for No. 12,969?"

The dudish young man looked up and then came forward.

"Indeed, I can't say," said he, at which a thundercloud seemed to gather about Mr. Valdemar's brows.

"You don't know, eh?" he cried.

"I've had the busiest day of my life, so far, and I'm tired."

"But you've got some memory left?"

"Precious little, Mr. Valdemar."

By this time the young clerk was standing alongside the old one.

"No, 12,969 has been redeemed. Nothing was advanced on it, as you see. I took it from a young lady last night."

"Well, didn't she come back after it?" answered David, with a show of spirit, as he encountered Valdemar's look. "What does the book say?"

"It says that the parcel has been taken away on presentation of the receipt. You transacted the business, and within the last few hours at that."

"What is wrong?" queried David.

"Everything!" almost roared Valdemar. "The young lady lost her receipt on her way home, and—"

"My God!" gasped the young man, with a glance at the detective whom he evidently took for an officer. "I—I had to accept the receipt, you know. It looked straight."

Mr. Valdemar said nothing for a moment, but opened a drawer at his right and took out a piece of a paper which he pushed across the counter to Major Million.

"It is just as I said, you see," he remarked.

"The receipt was made out for 'J. Malcolm.' The book corresponds with it. The party who got the box signed the page with the same name."

"Let me see it."

The heavy account-book was lifted down from the desk and placed before the detective.

For a moment he leaned over the counter and looked at the signature "J. Malcolm" scrawled at one corner of the page.

"Can't you recall who wrote that name there?" asked Major Million with his finger at the signature while he met young David's eyes.

"Really, I can't," was the response.

"Nothing about him?"

"Try," said Mr. Valdemar. "This is important. If the gentleman doesn't get a clew to this piece of criminal impersonation it will hurt

the reputation of the house. Our places are at stake, David, and you must recall something about the man who got article 12969."

The young clerk grew white about the lips and said feebly:

"Maybe you'd better look in the safe, Mr. Valdemar."

"Look in Greenland!" cried the old clerk. "It isn't there because the book has been signed by the person to whom 12,969 was delivered by you, David—by you!"

Major Million pitied the young man whose hands beat the edge of the counter with their trembling. Valdemar watched him with un pitying and merciless eyes.

"I think I see him!" suddenly said David.

"I am trying to associate the delivery of the box—it was a box, wasn't it?—with the person who got it. I recollect that I was very busy at the time—there were several people waiting—"

"But what was he like?" thrust in Mr. Valdemar.

"I think he was a small man—almost had to stand on his tip-toes to sign the book. Yes, he was small. He had a funny mark above one of his eyes. I saw it when I delivered article 12,969. He went off like a shot. I recollect that, too."

"Are you sure of this, David?" insisted the old clerk.

"I think I am, Mr. Val."

The next moment Mr. Valdemar looked at the detective.

"Is the testimony worth anything?" he inquired with eagerness.

"Yes," rejoined Major Million. "A little man and a scar? It isn't so bad as it might be. Keep dark about this for the present."

"Are you a detective?" tremblingly asked David.

"Never you mind what the gentleman is," said Mr. Valdemar, tapping the young clerk's shoulder. "If the man who got No. 12,969 isn't found, off goes your head!"

David gasped for breath.

CHAPTER IX.

RUN DOWN.

It was not altogether a stroke of luck that threw the millionaire detective so soon upon the trail of the treasure-box lost by Janet through the theft of the loan office receipt.

He had tried several other establishments of the same kind before he alighted on the slight clew obtained at Give & Take's counter.

If the man who presented the receipt and secured the box was the person rather vaguely described by David, he was the person to be hunted up or down, and Major Million left the building with this resolve in view.

The singular mark above one of the man's eyes, associated with his stature, seemed to afford the detective more hope than he had expected to enjoy.

A shrewd thief would naturally desire to obtain possession of the article designated by the receipt or ticket found in Janet's purse, and in order to do so he would act before the girl could report her loss at the loan office.

If Janet had been more prompt in this the rascal might have been frustrated. But she was afraid to venture back in broad daylight, lest she should fall under the espionage of Salome, or some one connected with the gold gang, hence her actions which have been detailed.

Major Million went neither back to the anxious girl to report the result of his hunt, nor to his own house.

It was nearing noon when he appeared suddenly to a woman who had just tripped down a flight of narrow steps, and who fell back against a dirty wall, and stared at the detective.

There were still many traces of beauty in the woman's face. She was young, though marked by early dissipation, and her sudden cry told that Major Million was the last person she expected to see in the house at that time.

"I wish you'd go away," said the startled creature coming toward the city ferret, and touching him warningly with her hand. "You know it is worth your life to come here at this hour. They were talking of you but last night."

"They, Leone?"

"Yes—you know who!"

"Are you alone now?"

"Yes—no. The baby is in the house."

The woman smiled at her own words.

"What do you want? Something from me that will hang or incarcerate him?"

"I want some information."

"What has he been up to again?"

"Nothing very much; perhaps nothing," answered the detective.

"Yes, he has done something, or I would not see you here now. What is it?"

Not once during the conversation had the woman called the detective by name. For all this it was evident that she knew it as well as his calling. Her fear of betraying him to listening ears might have been her excuse for withholding his name.

"Why don't you go on?" she continued, looking at him between impatience and despair.

"What has he done?"

"He has picked a pocket."

The young woman shut her teeth hard and grew white in the face.

"He said he would never do that again!" she cried. "He promised me over the child that he would not stoop to that contemptible crime. But you may be on the wrong trail."

"A short man with a mask over one eye! You see there can be no mistake, Leone," answered Major Million.

"I thought something was in the wind. Can't I save him?"

"You can help. Where is he?"

"Not in the house, you may be sure."

The detective looked into the depths of the woman's eyes and appeared to read her very thoughts through them.

"Leone, you think a good deal of the Rover if he isn't altogether 'straight,'" he resumed.

"I think the world of him," parted her lips in an instant. "He is my husband and the father of Pearl. Don't intimate that I don't think anything of him."

Her eyes flashed.

"Then, you must tell me the truth."

"Yes. But I am no traitress!" and she drew her figure to its true height and stood before Major Million with her hands clinched till the nails seemed to lose themselves in the palms. "If you want the truth and betrayal at the same time you have come to the wrong place. I won't betray him!—there!"

The nabob ferret looked up-stairs at this moment and saw a little child coming, baby-like, down the steps.

A cloud of golden hair fell over the little one's shoulders, almost hiding the pretty face and shutting out the laughing eyes just opened, after a sleep.

"Don't ask me to betray the father of that child!" continued the young woman, pointing at the babe. "You detectives, as a class, have no pity and little mercy. I know a good many of your sort."

She stopped abruptly and tripped up two steps, seizing the child and covering it with an abundance of caresses.

As she came back to the detective with the child in her arms a door opened and shut in another part of the house.

"Never mind that, major. He won't be home till his time comes. You can go on now; but remember!—no betrayal."

"Agreed!" rejoined the detective, with a smile. "As I have said, the Rover has picked a pocket. It was a young girl's pocket, at that, and he took all she had in the world. He could take no more."

"Was it very much?" asked Leone, quickly.

"Not a great deal in our eyes, but she could not afford to lose it."

"Was the loss in money?"

"Not altogether. He took a piece of paper which he afterward turned to account."

"A check?"

Major Million shook his head.

"He took his spoils to a loan office and there secured an article which his young victim had left on deposit."

Leone was all attention now, and the caresses of the child did not seem to be felt.

"You know what he got, Leone," exclaimed the detective. "He is good at stories. Once before he told you that he found something when it turned out different. You know what he got at the loan office, I say."

The woman flushed and then got white.

"I said I wouldn't, and I won't!" she cried, shutting her teeth hard as the word came out. "If you pull me into court you will find my mouth sealed like the door of a tomb. I will go to jail and rot there before I betray him!"

"Very well," laughed Major Million. "You have a decided choice, I see, but I don't want Pearl's mother to cross a prison's threshold."

"Ab, don't you?" smiled Leone. "You know where I've been already."

"Yes."

"Why not go to the jail?" she went on.

"But you need not. He brought the box home."

There was no reply.

"Did he tell you that he had found it?" ventured Major Million after a pause.

"No matter what he said!" snapped Leone. "I don't betray him, I say!"

"Just as you wish, Leone," answered the detective, and at the same time he moved toward the door.

"Are you going to put the screws to him?" she burst out, as she sprang toward him with the child still in her arms. "Because I won't give him away, you will deprive Pearl of a father's care! We've got to live. I don't claim that we are the lambs of New York society, but I do say, that we are not altogether wolves. He hasn't got the box now."

"Ab! he got rid of it, did he?"

Leone seemed to think before she spoke again.

"What is there in it for us?" she asked.

"More than you think, maybe."

She looked steadily at the detective for several seconds, and then went on:

"In the first place, he is not to appear in anything that follows."

"I promise you that he shall not, Leone."

The woman put the child down and bade it crawl up-stairs, a task to which she set herself with a laugh.

"Will you wait till he comes?" she inquired.

"I promise you that he will treat with you."

"When will he be here?"

Leone opened a door behind her and looked into a room.

"It is time for him now," she responded, turning to the detective again. "He is always punctual when he makes a promise to Pearl as he did this time, and—"

She was interrupted by the sound of a door.

"He is in the house now. Step back to the wall so that he won't see you till he gets up."

Major Million obeyed, with one hand resting with apparent carelessness on his hip.

A footstep soon sounded at one end of the hall and then a figure came toward them.

The following moment Leone was joined by a man who spoke the instant he came up.

"I found a buyer, just as I said I would, Leone!" he exclaimed. "I made him pay well for the box—"

There he stopped as if he had suddenly read the language of Leone's eye, and in a twinkling he whirled and confronted Major Million.

"You?" he cried, as he recognized the nabob-ferret, who was smiling at his start. "I did not dream of finding you in the house. What have you said to that gold-collared bloodhound, Leone?"

He had turned upon the woman with the fierceness of a tiger, and the scar above his eye glowed like a living coal.

"By heavens! if she has betrayed me, I'll kill her, Major Million!" he cried.

"She has betrayed nobody. There was no necessity for such action. I know enough without her testimony."

The little man looked at the detective, but said nothing.

"Well, what did you get for it?" inquired Major Million.

"For what?"

"Come, come!—for the box, of course! You played it well on David the clerk. You would not have succeeded so nicely with old Valdemar. The papers inside the box told you where to find a market for them, didn't they?"

"That's just what they did!" grinned the Rover, while Leone looked on with blanched face. "I knew where to go the moment I saw them," he went on. "But I don't betray my customers. I'd go to the noose first, and, what is more, Major Million, you haven't got money enough to buy me. Here! I'll show you something."

The little man turned to the wall and threw up his hand.

"No, no!—don't!" cried Leone, grasping at his arm, but it was too late.

All at once the hall was filled with darkness, and Major Million felt the floor drop beneath his feet!

CHAPTER X.

WHERE THE TREASURE WENT.

"THAT is what I call the best trade of my life. I wasn't expecting anything of the kind as a matter of course. Are they all there, Salome?"

"Nothing seems to be missing so far as I can see. What was the man like?"

"He was a well-built, little fellow, quick and somewhat restless during the negotiations. I had never seen him before to my knowledge, though he knew me, and also that I would like to possess the box which fell into his hands, Heaven knows how."

"I would like to know how he got the treasure," said Salome, turning from Colonel Nolan to the metallic box on the table. "It is all a mystery and one which the little man prefers to keep to himself."

"Well, let him keep it!" laughed the burly colonel, relighting a cigar. "When I saw the box under his arm I nearly lost my breath, and I thought to myself that I would willingly give both ears for it."

"What did he say?" queried Salome. "How did he open the matter?"

"He said that he had something which he thought I might like to have, and when I replied that there was nothing I particularly wanted just now, he threw back a cloak he wore and there was the box—the identical one which you did not find in the niche when you had discovered Mayne Malcolm dead in his chair. He next went on to say that he knew that the box was of more value to me and to my friends just now than to anybody else, hence his appearance here with it. After that we were not long closing the bargain and the mysterious little man went off five hundred dollars richer. And I had the treasure-box which secures to us the golden prize of the game."

"And not a hint as to how the box fell into his hands?"

"Not a hint, Salome."

"He did not say where he can be found in case we should want to see him?"

"No."

"It is very singular."

"I think so," replied Colonel Nolan, sending a cloud of smoke toward the ceiling.

Salome, the Dark, went back to the box again and took out some documents tied with red tape.

The big colonel leaned back in his chair and watched her intently.

All at once Salome stopped and lost color.

"What is it, now?" inquired Nolan.

"Two papers are missing."

"Ah!"

The colonel leaned forward and dropped his cigar.

"We must find the man who sold you the box," continued Salome, looking at him. "He had an eye to business, sure enough. He has reserved something for a future transaction."

"Go through the papers again, Salome."

"There is no use of that. Two are missing."

"Which two?"

"The will and the statement."

Colonel Nolan fell back.

"I did not look at the contents of the box with any degree of accuracy," said he. "I held back for you. If the little man has kept the two documents—"

"He has!" interrupted Salome. "They were here when Basil looked at the treasure last. We must find the negotiator."

"And leave Major Million on the trail?"

"No! We are strong enough to cope with both. Give me a minute description of your box-seller?"

Colonel Nolan put his thinking-cap on, and described the Rover to Salome to the best of his ability. He drew a pen-picture that lacked nothing in its details, for the importance of the man's errand had caused him to give him particular attention.

Salome took down the description mentally word for word as it fell from Nolan's tongue.

"I shall send Knute out on the trail," she observed. "He has no more watching to do now. Basil also may take up the scent. He used to know the trading classes of New York."

"Do you forget Janet?"

"Not for a moment; but the girl is no longer an obstacle. At first I thought she stole the box, because she disappeared so suddenly; now I believe that the man who sold it to you is the original thief. We will not wait till after the funeral. Doctor Downly's certificate will not be questioned. He has a reputation which no one will suspect."

"No one but the detective, perhaps."

"Ah! there is that bound again!" exclaimed Salome. "I wish Basil and Knute had finished him when he called for the box. They had him at their mercy, and Knute has cursed himself a thousand times since for not springing on him like a tiger from behind. We miss it sometimes in life."

Salome showed her white teeth in a smile.

"The next time there will be a tiger-play, and another opportunity will not be lost. After all, you paid well for what you got."

Nolan's eye fell upon the papers on the table.

"I did, indeed, if the two documents you have mentioned are really missing," he replied. "I'd give another five hundred to have the little man here and my hand at his throat. It is all very plain to me now. He or some one else is holding the papers back for a big bargain. What if Major Million should find this out? What if the documents should fall into his hands?"

Salome said nothing.

"I wish you would do something," continued the Hercules springing up and pacing the room excitedly. "How are you going to keep this detective from picking up a clew?—how find the man who sold the box?"

"I see. I am to do the work," answered Salome. "I am the person who is to talk these two men—the detective and the thief. If I had been here when the box was offered I would have gone through its contents paper by paper before the man left. But you, supposing that you were getting everything we wanted for the money, paid over the cash."

By this time the two were looking at each other with less than five feet between them.

"I wish you wouldn't talk that way," said Nolan in tones of resentment. "You are continually saying that I do nothing—that I sit back while you take all the risks and make all the plays."

"What have you done?" cried Salome.

A sinister smile played with Colonel Nolan's lips before he made reply.

"To begin at the beginning, woman," rejoined he, "I found the prize for you. I then showed you how a million could be won, and after that I swept from your track a man who knew enough to lock you up the remainder of your natural life. And yet I have done nothing!"

He laughed till Salome's face grew as white as the unsullied bits of paper on the table at her hand.

"Do you want me to go on?" he proceeded, eager to follow up his string. "I can tell you more."

"You need not do it," was the response. "You have done nothing of late, that's what I meant."

"My God! nothing of late!" he repeated.

"You were the person to do that work. You knew how to do it, too, in spite of Dr. Downly and his science. You need not stand there and look at me so. The game isn't played out if Mayne Malcolm is in his coffin. No! it is just begun now that Major Milhon, the nabob ferret, is on the trail, and two of the most important papers in the hands of a common New York burglar."

"That is true!" cried the dark-faced woman, throwing herself forward and grasping the colonel's arm. "We will do our quarreling some other time if quarrel we must. Let us go to work now. I have set Knute upon the dog who has left his golden kennel to smell us out. He received instructions which I thought would cause him to hesitate, but he did not quail. Knute has a sharp eye and a steady hand. He has played hound and stroke before, and he would fringe his path with dead men for me."

"One of the world's fools!" laughed Colonel Nolan.

"But one who will not stop half-way when he serves Salome," was the retort. "I have counseled with Basil and he knows his part. Now, sir, we can look for the man who sold the box."

"I swear that I don't know where to look," remarked Nolan. "One—and especially a person of his stamp—can hide in a thousand places in Gotham."

"Not for long when I want him!" spoke Salome, gathering up the papers which she had taken from the box. "As to Janet, if we had to find her, that would not be much of a task. All we have to do is to watch Lorain Downly."

"Doctor Downly's son?"

"Yes."

"Are they acquainted?"

"They are lovers," smiled Salome. "The girl will communicate with the young man; she has doubtless done so before this and he will visit her, no difference where she is. But let her go for the present. If we want to find her, Lorain will show us the way."

Having delivered herself thus and shut the metallic box, Salome left the room watched by Colonel Nolan till she disappeared.

"The most remarkable woman I ever saw," he muttered. "She will direct Basil and Knute besides taking a hand in the hunt herself. Ah! she is going out now! I wonder what the orders are to be?"

By this time Salome again stood before the colonel who looked at her as he waited for her to speak.

"Stay here!" she said, sharply. "The little man may come back, though it is not likely that he will play the second card so soon."

"But if he should come—"

"I'm coming to that," broke in Salome. "If he should make his appearance and offer to sell the missing papers, make sure first that he has them on his person."

"I would certainly do that."

Salome held up her finger commanding him to keep silent.

"Find out, I say, that he can deliver at once what he proposes to sell," she went on. "Then see that you get the papers."

"At what price?"

"Heavens, man, what are your hands for?" exclaimed Salome. "This room is not large and you are agile if you are a giant. A leap and a clutch! A man against the wall, and presto! the prize is yours without the loss of another dollar. You understand?"

"Yes, and I will carry out the suggestion if he comes," replied Colonel Nolan.

"And see that he does not bite you," resumed Salome. "I am going to play a hand elsewhere. Keep your eyes open for the little fox, and, as you value your neck, don't let him get the better of you."

It was some seconds before Nolan had recovered from Salome's outbreak.

Then he lighted a fresh cigar to steady his nerves, and as the day wore on he grew calm though eager, and waited like a spider in his cell for the fly to come to the net so that he could crush it for its blood.

CHAPTER XI.

KNUTE KNELSON'S TARTAR.

BUT it happened that Colonel Nolan waited in vain and when the shadows of night again fell over the city he had smoked up a good many cigars and had cursed a score of times the little man who had not come to be choked and robbed according to Salome's orders.

Neither did the woman herself come back to report progress, and at length he began to exhibit a good deal of uneasiness concerning her.

"Why wait any longer?" suddenly bolted Nolan when he saw that the street lamps had been lighted. "He doesn't intend to play his second trump so soon on the heels of the first one. He isn't the eager fool Salome seems to believe him. I won't get to rob anybody any more to-day. I'll go out and take something."

Which last remark meant that the Hercules of the golden web would adjourn to a famous restaurant several blocks distant and refresh the inner man.

This he proceeded to do, leaving the house to take care of itself during his absence.

While he was stowing away a good supper, a

man strolled into the long room and came down the table-lined aisle toward him. The colonel had purposely taken the last table in the place, because he did not want to be seen there by anybody who might have sinister designs against the League.

What, therefore, was his surprise when the man just referred to kept on till he had no more tables to pass, and took a chair opposite him with the assurance of Old Nick.

Colonel Nolan was about to frown his displeasure on this bit of coolness, when something peculiar in the man's look attracted his attention.

"Did he come?" whispered the diner, leaning half-way across the little table.

It was Knute, Mayne Malcolm's last nurse.

Nolan recognized him just before he spoke.

"No, and I waited all day for him," growled the colonel, in reply.

"I told Salome he wouldn't go back so soon."

"Ah! you've seen her, then?"

Knute Knelson's eyes seemed to glitter.

"I left her about an hour ago."

"Where was she?"

"On the trail."

"On whose trail?"

"His."

"But we have two to watch now," put in the colonel, quickly.

"Oh, the little man isn't very dangerous," Knute smiled. "He's only a burglar turned tradesman. Give me half a day and I'll have him out of the way."

"Then, by Jove! take the case!" exclaimed Nolan. "Maybe you have an idea who he is."

"Maybe I have," grinned the nurse. "I guess I know something about the crooks of New York, if I have been watching a man die these three months."

Colonel Nolan felt his blood leap pleasurably to the very tips of his fingers. He looked at Knute a few seconds and seemed to gain new hope from the countenance he presented.

"Well," continued the young man, "if the game does not come to the net, we must go after it."

"We can do that," was the response, though the big man, at heart not very brave, had no idea of inaugurating the chase in person.

"Then finish your supper, colonel."

Knelson spoke with the utmost unconcern as he leaned back and took a casual survey of the well patronized tables between him and the door.

An electric spark appeared to dart through Colonel Nolan's frame.

He returned to his supper with new zest, but before he had taken half a dozen mouthfuls he looked across the table at his companion.

There was something thug-like in the rather good looking well cut face of Salome's right bower. He looked like the sleek hired assassin of some Medicean Princess, and while the colonel studied him felt a strange chill run along his bones.

Knute did not appear to notice that he was the subject of his study. He was engaged, or seemed to be, in looking at the occupants of the various tables, and as his head was between Nolan and light it afforded the latter a good opportunity of inspection.

"Salome knew who she was taking in when she chose him. I'll bet my head on it," said the colonel to himself. "His hands are as soft as silk, but the more dangerous on that account. He and Basil make a good pair, but this man is the one to be most feared."

At the end of the last sentence, and as if he had heard it, which was, of course, impossible, Knute turned his head and encountered Nolan's look.

"Are you through?" he inquired.

"Yes," answered the colonel pushing back his chair.

"Come, then. I think I've made a discovery."

"Where?—in this place?"

"Yes, but come."

Then Knelson told the colonel to join him on the sidewalk as soon as possible, and without a word in explanation, passed toward the door.

"There's no telling what the fellow will do," thought Nolan. "I wish to gracious I had remained at the house. I don't want to be led into a foolish play. He says he has discovered something here. I wonder what?"

If there had been an avenue of escape Colonel Nolan would, in all probability, have seized upon it and left Knute to carry out any plans he may have formed single-handed; but the only way out of the restaurant was by the street door where Salome's spy was waiting for him.

Cursing the luck that had thrown him in contact with the young man, the colonel advanced toward the door. As he passed one of the front tables he suddenly came in contact with a face which looking up from a half finished supper seemed to have a familiar appearance.

"Where have I seen that face before?" thought Nolan, and with this reflection he passed out to be met by Knute on the sidewalk.

"Well, you saw him I noticed," exclaimed the spy.

"Saw whom?"

"The young man at the third table."

"Well?"

"Didn't you recognize him? It is Lorain Downly, the doctor's son."

"Is he your discovery?" queried the colonel.

"Yes, and I couldn't have done better just now. He knows where Janet is."

Nolan gave Knute a sharp glance.

"I thought the little man was more important—"

"To Salome perhaps," broke in Knute with an eager light in his eyes. "Just now I want to know where Janet is hiding. Wait till the young student finishes his supper. He will lead us to her; I'll wager my head on it, anyhow. Ah! he has tossed the napkin across his plate. Here, step this way, colonel. There is more in this chase than you think."

"More for you, perhaps."

Knelson with another glance at the young man in the restaurant, showed his teeth in a smile and pushed the colonel toward the building with his open hand.

"Are you going to shadow him?" inquired Nolan.

"I am."

"Is that according to Salome's orders?"

"Salome be hanged!" blurted Knute. "I guess a fellow can help himself occasionally. I'm not going to lose sight of the main prize of the game," he added. "Don't think so for a moment. I want to unearth Janet and I can do it by following Lorain Downly. Of course he has heard direct from her since her flight from home. I know the relations that exist between the pair, and— Ah! here he comes."

Knute Knelson appeared to be very unconcerned about him as Lorain passed out of the building, but he had not gone far ere Knelson seized the colonel's hand and whispered:

"We'll play fox awhile."

Nolan held back.

"It isn't my part of the game," said he. "I'm under orders, and I—"

"I'll let you go back in a few moments," interrupted Knelson. "If Downly turns down a certain street I'll follow him alone; if he wheels up another, we'll know that he's going home, and will leave him."

Nolan permitted Knute to draw him away and for some time they followed the doctor's son, keeping at a respectful distance, but close enough to keep him in sight all the time.

Suddenly the young student stepped into the middle of a street and threw up his hand to a cab which at that moment came up.

"That means Janet!" growled Knute.

"What will you do?"

"Why follow, of course," was the response.

"But how?"

"Cabs carry outside passengers sometimes. One moment, colonel. You can go back to the house and wait for whoever comes. If Salome—remember! nothing about our meeting and my chase! If the little man should come to sell the documents, be sure that you get them cheap."

"I've got orders from Salome," replied Nolan.

"Oh! Well, the future doctor has bargained with the cabman. I'm off now!"

The next moment Colonel Naseby Nolan started as if shocked by an electric battery.

A door within ten feet of them had opened and let a man out.

This individual was standing on the sidewalk partly in shadow and the moment the colonel saw him he fell back, dragging Knute after him.

"That is he!" he whispered, at the spy's ear. "That is the man who sold me the box! I'd know him among a thousand men, for there isn't another just like him in all the world."

Knute Knelson's eyes were riveted upon the strange man before the colonel paused.

At the same time the cab started on again, carrying Lorain Downly off, but he seemed to have forgotten his late intention.

"Then, he's got the documents!" he exclaimed, breaking from Nolan's grip. "I can afford to let Downly go for this bird in the hand."

Colonel Nolan felt his heart leap into his throat as Knute Knelson went toward the figure in the shadow like a shell fired from a gun.

He saw the spy fall upon the man and seize him, forcing him toward an opening between two houses all without noise and swift enough to make his blood run cold.

Colonel Nolan, glued as it were to the spot, could easily conjure up a terrible struggle between man and man in the darkness of the alley. He felt like rushing to Knute's assistance, but something held him back.

All at once something darted from the alley's mouth and ran away.

It disappeared before he could trace it twenty feet.

"Where is Knute?" cried the colonel, and with the query on his lips he went forward with his heart once more in his throat.

He leaned among the shadows of the alley and listened, then he took a step forward and stumbled over an obstacle on the ground.

It was the body of Salome's spy!

CHAPTER XII.

THE LIVING DEAD.

COLONEL NOLAN was one of those people who are always in schemes of some sort, and who

have, at the same time, a wholesome fear of the police.

Not for the world would he have been caught in that alley with a man just killed for his companion, and his first thought when he found Knute Knelson lying against the wall of a house was flight. But something, an unseen hand, seemed to hold him back. The man who had left Knute lying there had disappeared, so there was no danger from him, and the street beyond the mouth of the alley was uncommonly silent.

Nolan knelt over the body on the ground and ran one hand under the coat partly open in front.

His fingers touched something on which they instantly closed, and he drew forth a flat morocco memorandum which he quickly transferred to his own pocket.

He did not stop long enough to feel Knute's wrist for the flutter of the pulse, nor investigate the condition of the heart, but with the prize he had obtained, he sprang up and left the little man's victim alone.

At the first corner he almost ran against a six-foot policeman, but he did not inform him of the find that awaited him in the alley.

The colonel was anxious to get away from the place, and his legs did good service for the next five minutes.

He did not halt till he had reached the room left but a short time before when, throwing himself into the chair with a self-congratulatory exclamation, he proceeded to open the spoils of his adventure.

Turning the pocketbook upside down, a flat key and several slips of paper fell out. Then he began to turn the pages till he suddenly stopped and cried, with every vestige of color driven from his face:

"By Jove! this is a nice thing for a man like Knute Knelson to be carrying about! These entries are not as obscure as they might be. What if this memorandum should fall into Major Million's hands! He would ask nothing better. Here is a record of his attendance on Mayne Malcolm from the first day of his employment up to the patient's death. He tells when I came, when Salome dropped in, and when she gave him medicine with her own hand! Why did he keep such a diary? I wouldn't have missed finding it for a cool ten thousand for it is worth that much to me."

Colonel Nolan continued to read the various entries in the book till the last page had been perused when he again congratulated himself on his unexpected "luck."

"To-morrow we shall know who found Knute in the alley and what the police think about it," said he addressing himself. "Major Million will have a theory of his own, but we won't have it paraded in the papers. What will Salome say? I won't say a word about my adventure, for she would censure me for not rushing to Knute's rescue. It is better as it is. If I had saved Knute, he would have kept the dangerous diary for—for Major Million, perhaps."

The giant of the plot sat far up into the night waiting for Salome, but as she did not come he went to bed and awoke with the morning light streaming in at the window.

He went to another part of the house and knocked at a door, but received no answer.

Salome had not come home.

"I'll take a turn through the paper, anyhow," muttered the colonel, and going out, he bought the first paper he could find and carried it back into the house.

In vain did he run his eye up one column and down another.

He scrutinized every paragraph and let nothing escape his search.

"Maybe he's there yet!" thought Nolan with a start. "It is possible that the police have not discovered the body. But pshaw! it has been daylight more than two hours and the people in the ally were astir long ago. Still, I might saunter down that way, and see."

Five minutes later Colonel Nolan might have been seen approaching the scene of his night adventure.

He looked cautiously on every hand to see if he was being observed by any one, but as he seemed to be unnoticed, he walked on to the alley itself.

The early bustle of a New York morning was about him, and in the doorway which Knute Knelson's heels had touched stood a perfect Amazon, exchanging words with a female in the second-story window directly overhead.

"Didn't you hear 'em, indeed?" queried the occupant of the window.

"No indade, Mrs. Markus," was the reply. "I slape like a log whin there is nothin' on me mind, as there was not last night. Phat samed to be the diffikilty betwene the gentlemen, I'd loike to know?"

"I couldn't make out, Mrs. M'loney. No words were passed: they fought a while, and then stopped. I was barely awake at the time, but still I heard 'em in front of your door. When I went to the windy, some time afterward, all was still, and there was nobody in the alley that I could see."

These words increased the mystery as it already existed in Colonel Nolan's mind.

He could not think of the police taking Knute

from the spot without alarming the neighborhood, yet, something had been done with the body—something secret and more mysterious than ever. He wanted to investigate, but how could he? To take the first step would be to place himself in a very perplexing dilemma.

In short, his mission, as one of discovery, was not very successful.

He turned back again.

"Salome ought to be here by this time," he murmured. "Maybe she has discovered something."

When he had let himself into the house he stopped in the hall like a person suddenly confronted by the ghost of one dead.

"In Heaven's name, what next?" he exclaimed, as he listened, with his heart in his throat.

The next moment he hurried forward and opened the first door he reached.

"You're a pretty rescuer!" laughed a voice, as he halted, spellbound, on the threshold and stared at the scene before him. "You took to your heels, I presume, the moment I tackled the little thug in the street."

It was Knute Knelson, by no means the corpse he was supposed to be, but looking like himself and apparently unharmed.

His companion was Basil Belfort, the private secretary, and the two had just emptied a bottle of wine.

"I thought you would finish the fellow, and then try to follow the cab that contained Lorain Downly," answered the colonel, when he found his tongue, which was not for several seconds.

"But you said he was the man who sold you the box," put in Knute.

"That was my guess."

"Well, I risked my life on your judgment, anyhow," rejoined Knute. "Come forward and see for yourself."

Colonel Nolan moved to the table, and Knute exhibited a slit in his coat over the heart.

"The night-cat has sharp claws, eh, colonel?" continued the young man, as he looked up at Nolan's astonished countenance. "He was no match for me in strength, but when it came to agility—whew! He had me by the throat with a hand that felt like silk, and then I felt a sharp pain in my breast. I thought it was all over with Knute Knelson then, for the street lights disappeared, and I seemed to drop into a well of Stygian darkness."

"When I came to," continued Knute, draining his glass of the few drops of claret left, "the man was gone, you were nowhere to be seen, colonel, and I had the alley to myself. It was a big relief to open my eyes again in this world. I found that some good angel had turned the point of the burglar's knife, and that I had nothing but a slight wound by which to remember his blow."

"Did he follow up his success with robbery?" eagerly queried Colonel Nolan.

"No," answered Knute, coloring slightly and biting his lip. "With the exception of a few drops of blood, I lost nothing."

"And you got nothing from the thug?"

"Nothing!" echoed Knute. "He gave me too much to do to rob him."

Nolan could not but think of the diary he had taken from the supposed dead man. It could not be possible that Knelson had not missed so important an article.

"He doesn't want me to know that he carried anything of the sort," flashed through the colonel's mind. "I'll see, Knute Knelson, that nobody gets a chance to rob you of it. You'll not carry it again soon."

As Salome did not come and to counteract the effects of his desertion, Nolan produced another bottle of claret and the three men made merry at the table.

"If I had not grappled with the supposed burglar last night I would have found Janet," suddenly observed Knute. "But it didn't delay me very much, for I had better luck this morning."

Colonel Nolan gave a slight start of surprise.

"So you've tracked her down?" he cried.

"Yes. I know where to lay my hands on her when I want her. She went to a queer place—to Mrs. Postlewaite's on Leaf street. Lorain Downly, the young saw-bones, had to call again early this morning; and that's how I found her."

Colonel Nolan was about to pursue his inquiries a little further when all three men turned their heads at the closing of a door, and in a moment Salome stood before the party.

With a look at all, the Queen of the League advanced and stood at the table.

"Did the thief come back?" she asked, fixing her eyes on Nolan.

"No."

"Did you shadow Major Million?"

She had turned to Knute Knelson.

"I had to fight for my life, and—"

Salome waved her hand and looked at Basil.

"What have you done?" she inquired.

"I have arranged everything for the funeral," was the response.

A smile played with Salome's lips a moment and vanished.

"Well, I have a bit of news, gentlemen," said she. "Doctor Downly is dead."

"Dead?" echoed the three men in concert.

The woman's smile came back.

"Dead!" she repeated.

CHAPTER XIII.

AVENGING THE DOCTOR.

SEVERAL seconds elapsed before either of the three men recovered composure enough to speak.

"It must have been sudden," remarked Colonel Nolan.

"It was," replied Salome.

"Was it—"

Nolan paused and looked at the glittering eyes set in the dark face of the beautiful woman.

"He was found dead in his private office—found by the housemaid," Salome explained.

"What do they think?" inquired Basil.

"We will have to wait for the verdict," smiled Salome, in reply.

"What does it look like?"

"Suicide," whispered the woman, leaning across the table.

Silence settled down over the group.

"Dead men tell no tales," continued Salome.

"Doctor Downly knew something which he evidently found a burdensome secret."

"And our secret is safe now."

The response was spoken by Colonel Nolan in a voice of thanksgiving.

"Do you think so?" cried Salome, wheeling upon the giant and looking him sternly in the eye. "Safe with two important papers in the hands of a shrewd burglar? Safe with Major Million the Monte Cristo detective on its trail? Is that your estimate of safety, Colonel Nolan?"

The Hercules of the game seemed to fall back abashed before the glowing eyes of Salome.

"That isn't your estimate, is it, Basil?" she went on, looking across the table at the private secretary.

The young man shook his head.

"I thought not," she resumed. "If our friend Jupiter Jowl was here, he would give it as his opinion that the secret is not safe with those two men at large. Death has stepped in in a remarkable manner. I think death has taken several trumps from our hands lately, and played them as well as we could have done ourselves. But," she added, smiling again, "there are some cards I prefer to play myself."

"That's all right, but death hasn't made any mistake thus far," observed the colonel.

"No, thanks to his discernment."

"Now, if he would only visit Major Million—"

"He will!" interrupted Salome. "We have turned hunters, and the New York ferret will find his match. With Jupiter Jowl as the dispenser of Mayne Malcolm's millions, I think we will not suffer. Ho! I should say not."

Just ten minutes afterward, Salome and Knute Knelson stood in the hallway near the door, the knob of which the young man held in his hand.

"Make no mistake," said the woman in low tones. "Lie around his house and watch him like a tiger. This man is the keenest detective in New York. He has untold wealth at his command, and allied to it he has acumen of no mean kind. He knows that death came to Mayne Malcolm in a shape never before seen in this city. He is Malcolm's avenger, appointed by the millionaire himself some time before he died. We have a coward in our league." Salome's eyes flashed as she said this. "There isn't a drop of fighting-blood in Colonel Nolan's veins, yet we can't put him aside."

"Yes, we can!" cried Knelson through his teeth. "The man cowardly deserted me when he knew I was having it life for life in the dark. I say we can push him aside and if you say so—"

"No, no!" broke in Salome with a glance toward the room where the colonel had been left with Basil. "Time enough for that yet."

"But his cowardice may betray us."

"I'll watch him too close for that."

"If you say so I must be satisfied," returned Knute, doggedly. "But remember! If I find him in the way—if his cowardice gives me trouble. I'll put an end to it."

There was no reply to these words and the young man's hand turned the knob.

He went away with a parting look from Salome which was full of meaning, and when he touched the sidewalk he looked up at the house with a curious smile.

"I've got a job on my hands, sure enough!" he exclaimed to himself. "I have to watch a watch-dog—to shadow a shadower and to put an end to his trail. After all its the only sure way to Janet—the quickest route to the million of the man who wasted in his chair till his blood turned to water spite of Doctor Downly's science. And the doctor is dead, too! He dies suddenly on his last patient's burial day. That's singular. I say it's very singular. Maybe Salome the Dark knew more than she told, and she never tells a great deal."

He was several squares from the house before he ceased to commune with himself, and within an hour he had established himself on guard where he could watch Major Million's house without being seen by any of its inhabitants.

Thus Knute Knelson put in the balance of the

day, sticking to his post with the patience of a well paid watch-dog.

The long espionage did not seem to worry him. He had a good point of observation and he kept it with eyes wide open and a cheery disposition.

Once, just before the lamps were lighted, he saw a young girl in a French cap come to the door and look up and down the street.

There was a shade of anxiety on her countenance and her nervousness indicated that she was anxious about some one in whom she was deeply interested.

It was Jo, Major Million's house servant, and Knute saw that she was very ill at ease.

Jo saw nothing on the street that reassured her, and she shut the door.

Ten minutes afterward she reappeared and repeated her action.

"The ferret is, to the girl, unaccountably absent," muttered Knute, when Jo's third appearance at the door had sharpened his curiosity beyond endurance. "I'm going to catch the house-fly in a web the next time she appears."

He deserted his post for the first time since taking it, and timed his play so as to catch Jo the moment she came forth again.

The servant started on seeing him, but as Knute touched his hat politely, and was on the step bowing before she had time to close the door—she was held by some strange power.

The wily fellow inquired if Major Million was at home, adding at the same time that he wanted to see him on important business.

Joan shook her head disconsolately, and cast a furtive look down the street.

"When will he return?"

Jo did not know. Indeed, he had not been home for many hours, and she could not say when he was apt to come.

Knute was sorry that he was not able to see the detective, but he would call again—he could not say when—and adding, with a light laugh, that it was not necessary to leave either card or address, he walked off, leaving Jo to search the street again, or watch him, as she saw fit.

"On the trail! No time to come home!" parted the lips of Salome's spy, and he looked around as if he expected to find the millionaire shadower at his heels. "Don't I know what his mysterious absence means as if I was with the man himself and shared his secrets? Give him rope and he will noose us all, but I will give him something that will not stretch! I don't propose to have a shadow in my wake—a shadow with a gold-lined palm, and a silken grip like the merciless one of death!"

Knute did not go back to the house where he had received the last instructions of Salome, the Queen of the League.

He kept on in another direction until he could look into the window of a small brick addition to a large house standing back a short distance from the sidewalk.

"I'd like to know for certain," murmured Knute, eying the window beyond which he could see several moving figures. "That is Doctor Downly's private office and there's where they found him dead as Salome and the papers say. I don't believe it was heart disease for he told me once while he was waiting on Malcolm that his heart was free from every ailment. I know something that might have made him want to get out of the world, but I don't believe he did it, himself."

Knute continued to approach the office and in a few moments he had crossed the lawn in front of it and stood in the shadow of some tall bushes that reached above the sill.

Leaning forward, he placed his face at the side of the window and looked cautiously in.

He saw three men at the doctor's table, and one was experimenting with some liquid which he had just dropped from a small vial.

Not a word was spoken till the test was completed. Then before the operator could report a young man whom Knute had not seen before moved toward the stand and looked at the group.

"I want to say that despite the opinion you are about to deliver, doctor," he said, measuring his words calmly as he uttered them. "I have one of my own. I don't care what may be the result of your test of the dregs of the wine glass found on Doctor Downly's table, I am here to proclaim it was neither heart disease nor suicide. It was murder, and I know the hand that dealt the blow and my hand will punish!"

The three doctors almost sprang to their feet, and the young man—Lorain Downly—drew his figure up before them and stood in the gaslight pale but composed.

"I know!" he went on, lifting his hand. "I've seen the work of this same destroying angel before this. The sod of Greenwood has just closed over one of her victims. The second one lies in another room of this house. Don't say 'suicide' to me. Doctor Downly was not the man he should have been. He made several false steps during life, but I am not here to disclose his frailties. I stand before you with the awful truth on my lips as Heaven will witness. Doctor Downly was murdered!"

The very tones in which the last sentence was spoken were almost enough to drive Knute from the window. His veins swelled and his hands

clutched. He glared at Lorain Downly like a tiger.

"Murder is it, eh?" he exclaimed. "Well, my young man, you'll have a fine time playing Vidocq!"

He stepped back from the window and reached the sidewalk as a figure passed.

"Ho!" he said under his breath and followed.

At the first corner he came up with his quarry, and as the woman turned he took another stride and seized her wrist.

"Do you know what Lorain Downly says, madame?" asked Knute.

"No."

"He has just told the doctors that it is not suicide but murder—that the same hand has just destroyed another life—"

The woman—it was Salome—broke in with two hissed words:

"Kill him!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ROVER AND HIS PRIZE.

AT precisely the same hour that witnessed the meeting of Knute Knelson and Salome, the Dark, a small man sat at a table holding up to a pretty young woman two folded papers which bore a striking resemblance to legal documents.

The room occupied by the two was poorly papered and as poorly furnished.

"Leone," said the man, glancing from the papers to the woman, "there's money in what I hold in my hand, but I hardly know what move to make next."

Leone said nothing.

"You want me to play safely, don't you, Leone?" he went on.

"Yes, you know that, Killis."

"Well, I might sell these papers to the big man to whom I sold the box, but he might be on the lookout—ready to play another hand because he did not find these two documents in with the goods."

"I've been thinking about that. You know I think you've made one bad play already."

"The one that cost the detective his tumble?" laughed the man.

"I tried to keep you from jerking the rope."

"But you were too late, eh, Leone? I knew as soon as I set eyes on Major Million that he was after the box. I don't pretend to guess how he got on my trail so soon, but there isn't a shrewder sleuth-hound than the millionaire in this city. I acted on the first impulse that seized me, and before I corraled a second thought, he had gone down the trap. But let me come back to these papers." He tapped the table with the documents. "I want to make the most I can out of the spoils, and I want to do it without getting nabbed myself. I've divided the results of my little trick on the street-car into two parts. The box and some of its contents I have already sold to a gentleman who is known as Colonel Nolan. I knew he was the right man to go to, for a week ago I heard a little conversation in the Park that opened my eyes."

"But I was smart enough to go through the box, Leone—to go through it carefully, too. In my hand I hold Mayne Malcolm's will in which he leaves all his wealth to the girl Janet from whom I cleverly filched a purse containing a receipt ticket from the loan office. Of course Colonel Nolan wants the will. I think he and certain other parties would give their ears for it. Besides the will itself, I have a paper more startling still. It must have been written by Mayne Malcolm when alone and at different times. You know what it says, Leone. You have read its remarkable secrets."

Leone nodded and held out her hand. The Rover dropped one of the papers into it.

"Don't sell this to Colonel Nolan," said she, encountering the man's look.

"Don't get tender-hearted when we are about to feather our nest by a lucky stroke of fortune," rejoined the pickpocket quickly.

"I don't want to see Janet cheated out of her own," was the answer.

"What do I care so we make a pile?" laughed the Rover. "People live off each other the world over. If Major Million had had his way, I would have been dumped into the police court as a pickpocket, if not on a charge of false impersonation. No, Leone, I intend to sell the papers I have, and sell them well."

"But not to Colonel Nolan and his wife, the dark-skinned woman who must be the head of the plot against the girl! I hope there's a little womanhood left in me yet."

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed the Rover, falling back in his chair, but he seemed to grow sober as he looked at Leone. "Of course there's lots of it in you, girl," he went on in different tones. "I think you're the best woman in the world—for me! But you don't want me to let the golden prize slip through my fingers?"

"I don't want you to get behind the bars," she replied. "You must not forget the man who went down the trap."

"I don't. It was the best trick I ever played, for if the detective had carried his point then, I wouldn't have any papers to sell. The man who tackled me last night was Colonel Nolan's friend, for the big man was with him when he made the dash for me. He got nothing, Leone, though it wasn't my fault. I'll stake my head that

Colonel Nolan directed the attack, but somehow or other he did not come to the rescue. No, I don't think it would be policy to take the papers to him now. I don't want to walk into a room with the documents in my pocket to have the Hercules jump at me like jaguar."

"There are but two markets—Colonel Nolan and the girl," remarked Leone.

"Wait! there is another," exclaimed the Rover. "The lawyer who has taken charge of Mayne Malcolm's estate ought to see the value of my spoils."

"Who is he?"

"His name is Jupiter Jowl."

"Do you know him?"

"Only by sight and the little I've heard of him."

"Does he know you?"

"No."

Leone seemed to reflect and her husband watched her closely.

"Could you find the lawyer to-night?" she inquired.

"Yes. He is at his office."

"I think you might try him," she proceeded.

The Rover put the two papers in an inner pocket and buttoned his coat over his breast.

"I'm going to see Jupiter Jowl, anyhow," he went on. "I want to get shut of these documents as badly as you want me to, Leone, but I don't intend to give them away. Of course I won't let on to Mr. Jowl at the first interview that they are actually in my possession, and I won't inform him that I am Killis Kayne, known to the police as 'the Rover' a gentleman whose ways are not as straight as a chalk-line. I think I know how to deal with Mr. Jowl. I've met New York lawyers before. As the man in charge of Mayne Malcolm's estate, he knows what the papers are worth, and will get them if he can."

"Don't biggle over the price," said Leone in an anxious voice. "I want out of this to get muddled—you know why, Killis."

"Oh, Pearl will never glance of it. She's too young," and the Rover glanced toward a door that stood slightly ajar. "We will change our quarters after I've made the bargain. We will go away—beyond the city; to your choice of homes, Leone."

He got up and looked steadily at the little woman a few moments while she stood at the edge of the table with her eyes cast down and her pale face for a moment flushed.

He knew that he had given her a similar promise a hundred times, and as often had broken it with a villain's coolness.

More than once he had escaped narrowly from the clutches of the police, and several times the devotion of Leone had saved him from prison. He was shrewd and cautious, but as merciless as an evil-doer. The police knew that the Rover, if cornered, would not hesitate to fight, that he could wield a knife with the quickness of the Malay, and that his ways had baffled them like a water trail baffles the bloodhound.

It was into the hands of a person of this description that Malcolm's treasure-box fell by the loss of Janet's receipt on the car. It happened that the Rover was on the platform when the young girl entered, and afterward, taking a seat beside her, he could not resist the opportunity to pick her pocket.

As a matter of course, for a man like the Rover to find the loan receipt in the purse, was for him to carry the game still further. He wanted the article left in trust by the fugitive girl, and he was shrewd enough to see that, from the wording of the receipt, the chances were in favor of his obtaining it.

The result of his visit to the loan office of Give & Take is well known to the reader, as well as the outcome of his subsequent call upon Colonel Nolan who paid five hundred dollars in cold cash for the box.

Killis Kayne had every reason to believe that the man whom he had dropped into the trap in the hall was still there and forever out of the game which he was playing in the interests of right and justice. He and Leone no longer inhabited the house. They had nothing to move, and had taken their departure soon after Major Million's fall.

If the police wanted them they would hardly come to the quarter where they were domiciled, and the Rover felt secure though there was a lurking fear in Leone's mind.

It would prove most disastrous to Janet as Mayne Malcolm's heir and to justice as well if the two missing papers should ever fall into Jupiter Jowl's clutches.

This man was a full-fledged member of Salome's League, and in all New York there was no greater rogue at the bar than he. Vulture-like, he had fattened on the sorrows and misfortunes of his fellow-men, and at all times he was ready to stoop to the lowest villainy to further augment his pile.

And Killis Kayne, alias the Rover, was about to go to Jupiter Jowl with Janet's fortunes in his hands! Of course the legal wretch—the money-leech of the New York Bar—would jump at the chance to get possession of the important papers without which Salome and her friends could not rake in the millions of her victim.

But he would not dart at the golden bait the moment he saw it. Jupiter Jowl was sleek and oily. He could dissemble with the ease of *Me-phistopheles*, and when he appeared indifferent to the matter before him, he was ready to throw his card.

It was not long after the Rover's last words with Leone that he found himself on the street with his coat tight over the precious documents.

He knew where to find Jupiter Jowl's office and equally well known was the fact that the lawyer-leech transacted a good deal of business between dusk and dawn.

He took occasion to pass on his way to the office the old house he had lately deserted. There was not a sign of life about the premises. No one had succeeded him as tenant.

The Rover recalled the occupant of the trap, and thought with a smile of victory how suddenly his trail had ended. Who would inherit the thousands of the nabob detective? And when would the police get hold of the sensation of his disappearance?

"I got in my work when he was napping," summed up the Rover, as he passed on. "If Leone had caught my hand I would have had to knuckle to the major."

He kept on, up one street and down another, on his way to Jupiter Jowl's office. He did not know that a figure behind him turned when he turned and stopped when he stopped.

If the Rover had had an eye in the back of his head, he might have darted aside and vanished in a jiffy. But who would follow him?

At last he reached the foot of the stair that led up to the web of the legal spider.

He could imagine Jupiter Jowl, sleek-faced and money-eyed, waiting in his den for some one to fleece.

The Rover felt his breast to make sure that he still had the papers, then, with a light chuckle of satisfaction, he went up the steps to bargain, with the coolest devil in Gotham.

CHAPTER XV.

PICKPOCKET AND LAWYER.

THE figure that had followed the Rover stopped at the foot of the stair, as if the trail ended there.

If the young crook had known that he had been dogged to the goal, he might have changed his tactics; but, as it was, he went on to Jupiter Jowl's office. This was a snug little front room, midway down the hall that led off from the head of the stair.

It was carpeted with a sort of matting, which showed signs of wear, especially at two places under the table where Jupiter and his clients usually sat. The walls were nearly bare of ornaments, and the bookcase in one corner had a lot of law-books jumbled together without any regard for the rotation of volumes.

Jupiter was the only occupant of the den when Killis Kayne after a hurried survey of the room, or as much of it as could be had through the keyhole, rapped lightly, but loud enough to attract attention.

In another moment the New York lawyer was looking at him in a manner that might have raised suspicion in the minds of others, for no sooner had Jupiter Jowl set eyes on the young man, than he knew that he stood face to face with the very person whom the League wanted most to see.

Colonel Nolan had already given him (Jowl), a description of the Rover, and the importance of the two documents supposed to be in his possession, was not underrated by the money sharp.

Of course the crook received a very cordial invitation to walk into the spider's parlor, but he did not notice that the lawyer bolted the door ere he turned away.

The Rover took a seat at the table, and the lawyer did the same as he arranged several penholders on the rack.

"My name is Rosewater—Robert Rosewater," began the Rover, at which Jupiter bowed.

"You give advice, I believe, and you give it even when you do not expect to assist any one in court."

"I deal in all forms of law," answered Jowl. "If I can be of any service to you, Mr. Rosewater, do not hesitate to draw on my legal knowledge."

"Well, I have a friend—a friend, understand—who has in his possession several papers which might prove of value to certain parties. There is a peculiar feature in the case which prevents him from seeking you in person, and I volunteered to come in his stead."

"I think I understand. Such cases are not unusual," put in the lawyer.

"Do you have them very often?" queried the Rover.

"Not often enough to make a living by them," smiled Jowl. "They belong to the profession as much as some other things. Your friend wishes some advice as to the disposal of the papers without legal complication, does he not?"

"Partly so," rejoined the young crook guardedly.

"Well, sir, you may proceed with the utmost freedom. I need not inform you that no

professional secret passes the door of this office. The name of Jupiter Jowl is guarantee enough for that."

"This friend of mind thinks that one of the documents is a will though he is not familiar with such things," proceeded the Rover. "Wills which are lost ought to be worth something."

"That depends," replied the lawyer. "A good many estates are insolvent nowadays. I understood you to say that your friend has two documents. Is the second one a will, too?"

"No."

"What is it?"

"It seems to be a statement."

"Sworn to legally?"

"No. At least, I am told that it has not been."

Jupiter Jowl was silent for a moment during which time he made ready for another advance.

There was nothing about the lawyer which told that he had "struck it rich" in a certain sense. His face was as impassive as he knew how to make it, and his brown silken hands rested lightly in his lap without a nervous tremor.

He was on the right track—had unexpectedly struck the trail to the missing links—and all he had to do was to play his hand with his usual caution and the game was won.

He looked at the young pickpocket across the table and seemed to study him for a second.

"We can't give the proper advice sometimes till we know the real nature of the case in point," said he with his oily smile which had captured more than one fat fee in his time.

"I understand that," returned the Rover.

"You settle estates, I believe?"

"Quite often."

"You draw up wills, too?"

"A part of our honored profession."

"Now," and Killis Kayne leaned forward and put on an air of great importance which caused Mr. Jowl to think that the crisis had been reached—"Now, Mr. Jowl, what would the will of one Mayne Malcolm be worth to those interested in the settlement of his estate?"

Although the bomb was dropped without much sputtering of the fuse, Jupiter Jowl did not betray himself.

"That is a pointed question," replied he.

"You ought to be able to answer it," put in the Rover, quickly. "My friend says that you were Malcolm's adviser at the time of his death."

"So I was."

"He tells me, too, that you have the legal settling of the estate."

"That is true to a certain extent."

The Rover fell back in his chair.

"And being thus situated, in this particular matter, am I to understand that you are indifferent to the return of Mayne Malcolm's will, along with another document which might prove just as valuable?"

"Not at all indifferent," smiled the lawyer. "We have not yet admitted that such a will is lost."

"Oh!" exclaimed the Rover, pushing back his chair. "If you refuse to make an admission of this kind, I need not waste time here."

He picked up his hat, which he had deposited on the floor, and got up.

"Just as you say," remarked Jupiter Jowl, in tones of supreme indifference. "I see that this is a matter of purchase, not of advice. I never buy anything without first inspecting it, with a view to testing its genuineness. I know more about the Malcolm estate than those on the outside."

"You ought to," cried the Rover. "You do know that the lost will of the dead man along with another paper is missing, and you know what they are worth to interested parties."

For the first time a quick flush suffused Mr. Jowl's face, but it quickly disappeared.

"I must adhere to my decision," spoke he. "I cannot—will not—negotiate for the return of anything without an examination of the goods. The man who has them to sell will find me a fair and honest customer, and if their purchase is desirable, he will be paid what they are worth."

The lawyer looked at the Rover while he spoke in a manner which told where he thought the documents were at that moment. His greedy and piercing eye seemed to penetrate beneath Killis Kayne's coat and rest on the property itself.

It caused quite a flutter in the young man's breast.

"Well, what would the documents be worth if they are genuine?" queried the pickpocket.

"If they should prove to be Mayne Malcolm's will and a statement belonging to the estate?"

"Yes."

"Really, sir, I can't deliver an opinion without an examination," persisted Mr. Jowl, with a suavity that was oil itself.

The Rover smiled, and came up to the table, touching it with his hand as he bent slightly over it.

"You are thoroughly understood, Mr. Jowl," he replied. "I will inform my friend that you don't care whether you recover the papers or not. He may find another market for them, and, if he does, it will be very soon."

The lawyer started, though he tried to keep his composure.

"Circumstances might be against him," returned the law-sharp, with just the slightest threat in his tone.

"Very well; that will be his lookout, of course."

"Certainly," bowed Jupiter Jowl. "He must remember also, that, wherever sold, the papers must pass through my hands."

An indignant light leaped up in the Rover's eyes, and he stepped back and looked the lawyer over from head to foot.

Leone's last admonition ere he left her was to keep his temper whatever took place; but he did not seem to think of it now.

The last sentence spoken by Jupiter Jowl was insolence itself, and the Rover's blood leaped like fire through his veins.

"That also depends," he exclaimed before he thought of Leone's advice. "It seems to me that my friend can find another market for the papers, and, since my mission to you has ended thus, I may advise him to seek it forthwith."

The lawyer colored, and bit his lip sharply.

"Even though we may reach no satisfactory conclusion," said he, "it might not be out of the way for me to ask at what price *your friend* holds the papers."

The Rover caught the derisive emphasis, but did not betray himself.

"Five thousand dollars will buy them," was his reply, at which Jupiter Jowl put on a look of blank astonishment.

"You don't want to bankrupt the estate and leave nothing for the heirs?" he cried.

"Five thousand from a million leaves—you know what, Mr. Jowl."

"There may be no million, nor a sum that approaches it. These New York estates are very deceptive. The secrets of many of them are never told, but remain forever locked in the administrators' breast. Five thousand for two papers, eh?"

"Five thousand or nothing!"

With this ultimatum decisively uttered, the Rover moved toward the door. Jupiter Jowl arose and followed.

"You are playing with law," said he, eying Killis Kayne sharply. "If you think you have deceived me you may be deceived yourself. I've practiced in this city twenty-five years and I am good at hitting the truth. I seldom miss the target."

"That's what they say about you," answered the Rover, though his words were not in the nature of a compliment—a thing which Jowl thoroughly understood.

"Throwing aside all cover, sir, the friend for whom you have been dealing to-night is clearly supposititious. The goods you want to sell are at this moment in your possession—"

The Rover broke into a laugh.

"So much for your penetration, Mr. Jowl!" he cried. "You won't pay the price asked, eh?"

"No! We don't compromise with crime here."

"Oh, you don't!" exclaimed Killis Kayne, falling back to the door. "Jupiter Jowl never stains his fingers with anything not entirely straight! When did he invest himself with the wings of purity, I'd like to know? Look here, old fellow; both of us have beaten the bush in a roundabout way pretty thoroughly to-night. You've played fox and I enacted the role of weasel, but not very much to our mutual gratification, I'm thinking. You don't want to pay anything for something valuable. I see that. You want seven figures for a cipher. You don't get 'em, sir!"

Jupiter Jowl grew red in the face.

The Rover laid his hand on the bolt and slipped it back. As it clicked the lawyer sprang forward, but the next moment he was looking into the muzzle of a cocked revolver behind which were the steady hand and the cool eye of the young crook.

"Stand where you are, Jupiter Jowl, or I'll retire you from practice!" came over the weapon, and the following minute the lawyer-spider of Gotham was the only occupant of his web.

CHAPTER XVI.

A DEAD MAN'S GRIP.

WHEN Killis Kayne came out upon the sidewalk again after his fruitless interview with Jupiter Jowl, he might have found the man who had tracked him still on guard. He did not look to see if he was watched, but started off against the wind, growling to himself over the result of the interview.

He could go back to Leone and tell her that his first attempt to get rid of the stolen documents had failed, or he could carry out the threat made to the lawyer—that he would take the spoils to another market.

If the Rover had known that Mr. Jowl was connected with Salome the Dark and her League of plotters he might not have been so ready to take the papers up the steps, but his discoveries as to Colonel Nolan had not led him thus far.

He had lost track of Janet after robbing her on the street-car, and to have saved his neck he would not have known where to have sought the young girl.

The pickpocket in the first heat of his anger against Jupiter Jowl thought of bargaining with Janet, and taking from her whatever she was able to give for the papers which would establish her claim to a fortune. He would thus avenge himself on the rascal lawyer.

But he did not long entertain this thought.

He had resolved to sell the documents at high figures; he could not afford to give them away, for in getting them he had opened the doors of a prison if not builded a scaffold in the Tombs.

He did not go back to Leone, but turned to the left and in nearly an opposite direction.

The shadow kept at a respectful distance, as if to have lost or frightened the Rover would have been an unpardonable blunder.

Once or twice the distance between the two men grew suddenly less, but at the end of Killis Kayne's tramp they were some distance apart.

The shadow was an agile, well-built man, with a pair of goggles astride his nose. He wore a suit of common clothes and had a light and airy step.

The Rover's twistings did not seem to discourage him in the least. He had a pocketful of perseverance and patience, and a deep pocket it was, too.

When the young pickpocket turned abruptly into one of the numerous restaurants that dot several streets that debouch into lower Broadway, the man with the goggles came up and followed his example.

The interior of the room was warmer than the street with its wind. It made the Rover unbutton the coat which he had kept closed to the frost even while he was parleying with lawyer Jowl in his warm den.

As he did so the corners of the two papers may have been seen by the eyes behind the goggles.

Killis Kayne ordered a small supper which consisted principally of veal which he attacked with the zest of a man who had been starved in this direction.

He was furtively watched by the goggles whose owner had taken a table a short distance away.

The Rover soon fell to studying the occupants of the room which was not large. He went from guest to guest with keen eye and considerable scrutiny.

At last he alighted on the goggles.

"What's the matter with his eyes that he don't take them off?" Killis Kayne asked himself. "He wasn't there when I dropped in, for I thought for a second of taking that table myself. He is paying extra attention to his supper just now. His shoulders are as broad and look very like a pair I've seen before. I wish I could see his eyes. There's where the man lives."

If the man in the goggles had been obliging he would have removed his shades then and there, but he did nothing of this sort.

The more the young pickpocket looked the more impenetrable grew the mystery. It worried Killis Kayne; it actually rendered him nervous.

"Confound it! I'll end the matter in some shape!" he exclaimed, draining his last glass and wiping his mustache. "I'll bet my head that I cut that man's meal in two, much to the satisfaction of the house."

The Rover got up and walked out, passing the goggles as he went down the aisle, but pausing a moment at the door to throw back a look of suspicion. He saw a head rise, then a pair of shoulders.

"I thought so!" he chuckled to himself. "A spy of the cops is it? or maybe somebody in the spider lawyer's pay—most likely the latter."

Killis Kayne walked away with a quick step, but ten yards from the restaurant door he whirled and came back.

When he reached the light he came suddenly upon the goggles—so suddenly, indeed, as to almost collide with him.

"I beg your pardon," said the Rover, slipping to one side, but he was not allowed to depart, for the hand of the stranger descended upon his shoulder and fastened there like a hand of steel!

This was done so quickly that the young crook had no time to draw a weapon, and in a twinkling he was jerked forward and found himself closer to the goggles than he had been before.

"Don't let me have to manacle you here," said a voice, the sound of which seemed to send a cold chill through the Rover's heart. "I seldom catch the wrong man, and nobody knows this better than yourself."

Killis Kayne's gaze was fastened on the face above him, and he thought he could see through the dark glasses into the eyes beyond.

"Did you think your trap had finished me?" laughed his captor, as he walked off, dragging the speechless and astonished Rover along as if he were but a mere boy.

There was no reply.

That which had been a puzzle was one no longer, for the shrewd Rover knew that he had fallen into the clutches of Major Million, the nabob detective, whom he had lately tumbled into one of the many man-traps of Gotham!

At that moment no doubt Killis Kayne thought of Leone and of his promise to her that he would be careful and keep out of danger.

But here he was in the hands of the last man he wanted to encounter—a man who he thought had been hustled out of the land of the living by his own hand.

But, Major Million had been befriended by that fortune which preserves detectives and drunkards; the Rover was fairly caught.

It took him some time to recover his breath, and when he had done so he was some distance from the scene of his capture.

"What are you going to do with me?" was his first and most natural question.

A hand pushed the goggles upward, and the pickpocket saw the detective's eyes regarding him with a twinkle.

"Do you think I'm going to let you go?" he asked.

The Rover thought not, but did not say so.

"It was a tumble in the dark," continued the detective, coming back to a subject which his prisoner did not relish. "I think you ought to get a patent on the trap for it is the most ingenious affair of the kind I have ever seen. How many people has it caught, eh, Mr. Kayne?"

"Only one," snapped the Rover.

"But you must have experimented with it—it worked so well."

Killis shrugged his shoulders, but made no reply to this sally.

"I say, major, what's your move?" he asked, growing impatient.

"We'll soon be there."

"At the station?"

"Wait and see."

For some distance the pair kept on. The complexion of the city changed, and the pickpocket, who knew New York like a book, knew also that they were not going to the station-house, of which he had a wholesome dread.

At length he mounted some front steps with the millionaire shadow and in another moment he had dropped into a chair in an elegant library.

"There is no trap-door under your chair," said the Magnate Detective, smiling on his prisoner. "I think if your wife Leone had been a little quicker your trap would not have worked."

"I think you're right," answered the Rover with more freedom than he had shown since his capture.

"But you were too quick for her!"

"A little too quick," said the crook.

The detective who had taken a chair directly opposite his prisoner looked him over from head to foot before he spoke again.

"You did not sell all you obtained by the receipt trick," he suddenly resumed.

The Rover started, and his heart seemed to stand still against the documents he carried in his bosom.

"You wanted two bites at a cherry," continued the major.

"How?" asked the pickpocket.

"You divided your spoils into two lots. The larger half in bulk you disposed of to the colonel, the balance you have just been trying to sell to our friend of the law."

Killis Kayne's only response was a look; he said nothing.

"I'll take them if you please," and Major Million put forth an open hand, while his eyes rested on that part of the Rover's coat where the documents reposed.

Just then the young crook would have given all he possessed to have been on the nabob shadow's front steps. Was he to be compelled to surrender for nothing the prize which he expected to sell for five thousand dollars?

Instinctively he shrunk from the detective's hand to the very limits of his chair. His face lost color, and his eyes bulged out.

"Come! I know you don't like to give them up. I wouldn't if I were the Rover, which I am not," resumed the detective. "You carry them in your bosom there—both papers. I'll take them, Mr. Kayne."

There was no escape.

The Rover saw that he was completely in the power of the man whose life he had attempted only a few hours before.

He put one hand beneath his coat and paused.

"What do you intend to do with me?" he inquired.

"We'll talk about that afterward," relentlessly answered the millionaire ferret.

"Are you going to send me up?"

"I have answered you. Come! Let me have the papers."

Killis Kayne bit his lip, through, his hand closed madly on the documents and the next instant he threw them on the table before the Magnate Detective!

His heart seemed to go with them for they were worth ten times their weight in gold.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WEB CATCHES A FLY.

To Killis Kayne this transaction was like being robbed by one who had come back from the dead.

He saw the major pick up the papers and glance at them one after the other as if to satisfy himself that he had not been imposed upon, then he opened a drawer at his right and quietly deposited them therein.

"I presume I will be marched off next," thought the Rover. "I've made a mistake to-night. I should have bargained with Jupiter Jowl. He would have paid something for the papers, and anything would be better than the predicament I'm in now."

"You've got a wife, Killis," said the millionaire Vidocq, at this juncture.

"I have," replied the pick-pocket brusquely, as if his captor had broached a subject which was not very pleasant.

"And a child," finished the detective.

The Rover nodded.

"Leone would go to the gallows in your stead if she were granted the opportunity."

"I believe she would, sir."

"But you will never ask her to do this," smiled the detective.

"What do you mean?"

"You have discernment enough to know without a query," was the response. "Why don't you give Leone and Pearl a chance to live in the sunshine? You go from bad to worse—from pocket-picking and house-breaking to attempted murder. You have sense enough, Killis, to know the end."

The young crook straightened suddenly in his chair, and he met the detective's piercing look with a flash from his own eyes.

"Whatever you do, do it now!" cried he. "You don't intend to give me my liberty. I am in your clutches and at your mercy. I sprung the trap on you in the hallway, and I am astonished to see you alive in your own house."

"You don't expect mercy, then?"

A curious smile appeared at the corners of the young burglar's lips.

"No! Why should I?" answered he.

"Well, I'll disappoint you," continued the detective. "You are free from this moment."

The announcement seemed to stun the Rover.

Free! It could not be! Major Million was only joking. He did not intend to restore to liberty the man who had plunged him down into a man-trap from which his escape must have been miraculous.

"You certainly understood me," the Magnate Detective went on. "I am in earnest, Killis. You are free!"

For a moment the Rover looked into the shadower's face and gradually found confirmation of the sentence there. He could not reply. He left his chair in a state of bewilderment and picked up his hat.

"You can thank Leone and Pearl for this," remarked the major.

The Rover looked down at the man in the chair and his lips for the first time quivered.

"Leone and Pearl will thank you," said he.

"What about yourself?"

"I add my thanks to theirs. But I am to be shadowed, I presume?"

"I have not said so, but you want to keep your hand out of the game they have been in. If you are caught at any of your crooked tricks, a witness whom you may not like to see on the stand might appear against you. Now, sir, go back to Leone and turn a new leaf!"

The Rover smiled faintly at the advice.

He walked to the door unmolested, he turned the knob and looked back at the man at the table.

"Good-night!" he said, as he opened the door, and, as the detective returned the parting, he rushed into the hall like a flying thief and did not breathe again till he was out on the street.

All this—the arrest and the spoliation—possessed the element of a wild dream to Killis Kayne.

The tiger had opened his claws and turned him loose; but he had robbed him. He was at liberty to go back to Leone, and he would have to tell her that his mission had failed in a double sense.

The dead had come to life, and he had been caught by the man whom he had tried to destroy.

The Rover walked several squares with his mind in a whirl and before he could bring it down to sober thought. The more he thought of his failure, the more desperate he got.

"I could go back to Jowl's office and kill the spider!" he exclaimed. "He wanted the papers the worst kind, but he wanted them for nothing. Well, that's what I got for them in the end—nothing! What will happen now? Why, Major Million will hand the documents over to Janet, and she will get the million, while Colonel Nolan and his friends will gnash their teeth. This millionaire shadower is a cool head and no mistake. I can't imagine how he got out of the trap, but I'll go and see some day. I suppose I can't empty another pocket on my way home and get another receipt. I'm willing to take the same risks again. I think I can do better next time."

But, Killis did not find another opportunity to ply his vocation as he passed down-town.

"Why not?" he exclaimed, stopping suddenly where two streets crossed. "It isn't more than three squares off and not much out of my way. I'd like to get even with the old curmudgeon to whom I owe my misfortunes of to-night. I'm pretty well fixed for a little play of the kind, anyhow."

He turned to the left and kept the darkest side of the street for some distance.

"The old spider is still in the web," murmured the young crook, seeing a light through the cracks of a pair of well-worn curtains at some second-story windows. "He may not remain there long any more, so I'll wait."

There was a deep doorway handy, and in this the Rover ensconced himself and waited for the light to vanish beyond the curtains. He wanted to pay Jowl back for not purchasing the papers which he had handed over to the detective.

"I won't bankrupt the old rascal. I'll just take enough to get even," thought Killis half aloud.

All at once the light watched so eagerly went out, and the next minute a man emerged from the stairway.

He was not alone, though of the two the Rover could pick out the lawyer with very little difficulty.

"That's a late client," remarked Killis, as the two men approached him. "By Jove! it is the man I saw talking to Colonel Nolan in the Park. Once or twice the Hercules called him Knute. Ah! I think I see something new. There is a connection between Jupiter Jowl and the colonel. But never mind. I'll carry out my little scheme anyhow."

Killis Kayne watched the two figures till they disappeared, and then slipped along the buildings and into the open stairway that led up to the landing where the lawyer's den was situated.

The big building was dark and apparently deserted, but the Rover found the right door.

Taking a queer-looking instrument of flexible steel from his pocket, he inserted it into the lock and worked with it awhile.

At the end of three minutes he opened the door and walked in.

Once more he was back in Jupiter Jowl's office.

He turned on the gas just enough to show him the interior of the room, and especially the old-fashioned heavy iron safe that comfortably filled one corner. The Rover's eyes fairly glittered when he saw the safe.

"If the old spider is up with the times in legal villainy, he is ten years behind in the art of money-keeping!" grinned Killis Kayne.

In another moment he was kneeling before the safe with the grin still on his countenance. Then he went to work.

The lawyer's treasure-box did not yield as readily as the door had done.

Twenty minutes passed, and the young thief was still at his task.

The safe was more obstinate than he had bargained for.

All at once he rested and listened.

There were footsteps in the hall beyond the door, and voices, too.

Had Jupiter Jowl and his companion come back?

Shutting his teeth hard, Killis Kayne rose and tiptoed toward the door.

There was a determined flash in his eyes.

He knew what would follow his capture by the man into whose face he had lately thrust a cocked revolver. If the precious documents were not found on his person he would find himself in the sternest toils.

Seconds seemed hours to the breathless Rover, who waited for the opening of the door.

"It won't take five minutes to settle on a plan," said a voice outside. "We must entrap the fox who carries our fortunes beneath his coat. What if he should sell out to Major Million? In such an event all the shrewdness of Salome herself cannot save the game. Ah! I have found the key now."

The following moment the click of the bolt as it shot back fell upon Killis Kayne's ears.

He stepped aside and pressed his body against the wall.

"I'll play weasel; it's my only chance, for I don't want to fight here," he muttered.

Just then the door opened, and two men came in.

As the last figure crossed the step the burglar darted forward, wheeled to the left beyond the door and sprang toward the stair.

"A thief! quick! Catch or kill him!" Knute! cried the voice of Jupiter Jowl.

In a flash, as it were, the Rover heard flying footsteps behind him. The noise only accelerated his speed.

In another second he was half-way down the stair, but as he struck the landing a loud report filled the hallway, and he pitched headlong into the street with a cry of mortal agony.

But, despite the cry and the tumble, he gathered himself up in a jiffy and disappeared up the street with an ashen face and clinched teeth.

"That was a bad play. I'm bored through and through; but I'll get home first and make Leone avenge me!" he grated.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TRAIL OF THE SERPENT.

As a matter of course, the Magnate Detective was anxious to confront Janet with the startling proofs of her fortunes which he had taken from Killis Kayne the wary young crook.

But this was not all.

Though he had obtained possession of the most important contents of Mayne Malcolm's treasure-box, there was much more to be done, or at least the detective thought so.

As the dead man's avenger he considered that he had more to do than to place the millions of Malcolm in the hands of Janet. The slow mysterious death of the man of money stared him in the face. He saw no matter which way he looked the dark but beautiful face of a woman—the serpent eyes of a modern Borgia, and the soft hands of a desperate Cleopatra.

Besides this, he was confronted by the other cool heads of the secret conspiracy—by Colonel Nolan, Jupiter Jowl, Basil and Knute.

These men, directed and moved by Salome, stood ready to play a game deeper and more merciless than the tragedy which he believed had been enacted within the walls of Malcolm's house.

He was one against the combination, for as yet the police had not taken notice of Malcolm's strange disease, and he had been put under ground where all traces of it were doubtless already lost.

A perusal of the papers secured from the young thug showed the detective the value of the booty he had obtained.

He not only discovered that Janet who seemed to have been actually hated by Mayne Malcolm had been made his heir, but that a startling secret had been revealed.

Janet was more than the millionaire's legatee, but the strangest part of the whole matter was that Malcolm should postpone justice so long.

The detective folded the statement and set out for Mrs. Postlewaite's house on Leaf street where he expected to find Janet.

On his way down he overheard a remark in the car which changed his mind.

Dr. Downly was dead!

Not only dead, but there were ugly rumors of suicide afloat.

Major Million, not recognized by any one in the car, got off at a street not far from the doctor's residence and was soon at the door.

It was late—verging on to midnight—but the bell was answered by a young man who gave utterance to an exclamation of pleasure when he saw the caller.

It was Lorain.

Pale and somewhat excited, the youth led the Magnate Detective into the little office whose curtains were pulled down.

"I see that you have heard of his death," observed Lorain. "It is terribly true. I was going to come to you in the morning when I had perfected my plans, but fortune has guided you hither. I want to set at rest any doubt you may have. It is not suicide, but something worse than that!"

The young man talked coolly, but with bloodless lips.

He pronounced the last words leaning slightly toward the major, and with his voice dropped to a whisper.

"Annabel!" he went on, "found him on the sofa, yonder, quite dead. It could not have been thirty minutes after he had dismissed a visitor with whom he had been closeted. But, before we come to this let me hold to the thread of my story."

"Go on," said the shadower, all attention.

"I want it all, you know."

"You shall have it link by link till the chain is complete—I mean so far as we can complete it now. Annabel says she found him looking, as it were, at some object on the table. What articles were there then? His pocket case and a tall wine glass. The case was barely visible from the sofa, the glass stood out prominently. It contained an almost colorless liquid—Dr. Downly drank white wine for an ailment which he believed he had, and he kept a glassful of it within reach at all times. The girl says that she believes that he had his eyes fixed on the glass when his life went out. I think so too, and if it be true that the last object seen by the dying is photographed on the sensitive plate of the eye the wine glass is now on his."

"The alarm was at once given. Dr. Legard was the first representative of the profession here; he is a close student and a toxicologist. He preserved the remains of the liquor in the wine glass, but at my solicitation when I came—having seen a notice of the death in a downtown paper—he divided with me. Dr. Legard has tested his share of the liquid; he did so in presence of several of his colleagues; but I did not give him time to report. Perhaps I was a little hasty; I should have waited for Dr. Legard's opinion. As it was, I stepped forward and told the doctors that Darius Downly was murdered. Of course this was a bombshell in the professional camp, for Dr. Legard and his colleagues lean to the suicide theory, and each one will say so when the time comes."

"There was a subtle poison in the wine glass!" continued Lorain, with emphasis. "It is one with which Doctor Downly was unacquainted and he knew toxicology as well as the best of them. I might have been here when his last caller came, but for one thing. I had left home. I went away because of a weakness on the part of Doctor Downly which made my

blood boil when I thought of it. He knew what killed Mayne Malcolm—he saw the man dying by inches in his handsome house, surrounded by spies and visited by several persons who are playing the deepest game of diabolism ever played in this city or elsewhere. I had talked to him—I had given my opinion concerning Malcolm's case, for I sometimes accompanied him to his patient; but he would not act."

"Well, Major Million, I am confident that the last caller Doctor Downly had was the same serpent whose trail has crossed the Malcolm threshold. His last visitor was a woman. Annabel let her in and saw her depart from the head of the stairs in the hall. The girl was not fortunate enough to catch her face; she can only give its outlines. And yet, with this woman in this office a short time before Doctor Downly is found dead, they call it suicide!"

A smile of derision rested on Lorain's lips.

"You don't think so?" queried the detective.

"I do not," was the firm response. "Doctor Downly fully intended to investigate Mayne Malcolm's strange malady. But, all at once, he gives a certificate of death and the knife is not brought into requisition. Annabel says that on his return from the dead patient, he shut himself up in his library for two hours! What did he do there? He wrote and destroyed, destroyed and wrote again. When a man does this, you know, he finally gets something that suits him. Well, Doctor Downly did."

Lorain crossed the room and unlocked a little desk in one corner.

"I believe that I hold in my hand the results of his seclusion," he resumed, coming back to the Magnate Detective, with a paper in his hand. "It is a description of Mayne Malcolm's case, and beneath it is a sentence which gives me more light than I find elsewhere because I know something about Doctor Downly's life in Italy. We don't want the opinion now, do we, major?"

"No," replied the major with eagerness.

"Then, you shall have the conclusion of the paper. It is as follows:

"It is a parallel case—even to the smallest particulars—to that of Count Ugaurdi, for whose death his wife was tried and acquitted at Pisa, June, 1871."

The young man looked up and seemed to study the detective's face for several seconds.

"You have heard of this Italian case?" said he, with a faint smile.

"I have," answered Major Million.

"But there is one thing you do not know."

"What is that?"

"That the Doctor Vono, who testified in the prisoner's behalf, is Doctor Downly!"

The Magnate Detective could not repress a start.

"This is true," continued Lorain. "It is a secret which has been well kept. Doctors are supposed to be good keepers of secrets, and the one who lies in the next room in his coffin was not an exception. Yes, Doctor Vono, whose testimony hung the Italian jury and ultimately acquitted the countess, and Doctor Downly are identical! He was then an expert on poisons and I believe he knew by what subtle agency Mayne Malcolm went to his death."

"Now, let me show you two pictures—one brought from Italy by Doctor Downly, the other secured by me within the last three months, by the button camera."

Lorain led the detective into the darkened library of the dead doctor, and opened a small receptacle beneath a shelf of books. Having turned on the gas, he took from the drawer a photograph of a beautiful woman in full Italian dress and banded it to Major Million.

The next moment he drew from his own pocket a smaller picture, likewise the portrait of a female, and, without a word, placed it in the man-hunter's hand, alongside the Italian one.

Major Million studied the two faces intently, first one, and then the other, then both comparatively.

"Why, I hold two studies of the same person!" he suddenly exclaimed.

"Do you think so?" smiled Lorain.

"It can't be otherwise. There is a difference as to the dress, but the eyes, the mouth—"

"Are the same, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, Major Million, as the world has nicknamed you, the picture I took from the drawer is that of the Countess Ugaurdi, the other one is the portrait of the woman called Salome! Ah! don't you think I have the true links of the chain?"

"You have."

"Very well," and the large eyes of the young doctor glittered with victory. "If you will help me, we will run the guilty down."

"I will help you!"

"But, let me say that we have our match before us."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE MIDNIGHT SPY.

It was so late when the millionaire detective got away from Lorain Downly, that he concluded not to go to Janet's that night, and shortly afterward he dropped into a chair in his library with his head filled with the strange and startling revelations that had been made.

No visitor awaited his return, and no message, and Jo, the maid, had nothing to report.

"I think I've done a good deal since I got out of the Rover's trap," mused the shadower when he had summed up the results of his last plays. "Killis Kayne is not likely to bother me any more, for he will profit by my mercy, and Leone will plant herself firmly between us. I've got to meet Salome and her machinations—the Italian countess and her tools. Doctor Downly knew too much, and Doctor Downly is dead. Lorain was a little fast in proclaiming his opinion of the doctor's sudden death. Salome may get to hear it, and the young man will be in danger himself. The two portraits were a revelation for which I was not prepared, but there can be no mistake if what Lorain says be true. I am sure that Mayne Malcolm knew nothing of Doctor Downly's life in Italy, though he more than suspected that Salome was a fugitive from foreign justice of some kind. I have yet to learn how that woman wormed herself into his confidence, but she is capable of doing anything. And where she is I find Colonel Nolan, the Hercules of the plot, as Basil and Knute Knelson are the serpents that played their part in Malcolm's household."

A smile passed over the detective's face, and it was still there when the door knob softly turned and the face of Jo appeared.

The pretty housemaid was white and frightened, and before Major Million could ask the cause of it all she placed her finger at her lips in token of silence.

It was past midnight, and the street without was quiet, if not deserted.

The Magnate Detective left his chair and walked across the floor without any signs that he had been called away by any one.

As he reached the girl, who retreated into the hall as he advanced, her hand caught his sleeve and her lips whispered:

"There is some one on the watch!"

"Where?"

"At the window. And it is a woman," added Jo.

A name seemed to flash across Major Million's mind.

Salome!

For a second he stood before the excited girl, and looked at her.

She had stolen down-stairs in her stockinged feet and shivered with cold.

"At which window, Jo?" he quietly asked.

"The one nearest the door," was the answer.

"I happened to be up, and on going to my window I saw a figure glide toward the house. She was there when I left to warn you, and she may be there still."

"A thousand thanks," smiled the major. "Go back to bed, my girl, and leave the rest to me."

"She must be a spy—probably the woman whose husband sprung that awful trap on you."

"Leone? No, she is not Leone unless there is danger from the same source. Ah! that is right—go back and don't let any fears disturb you."

The detective saw the figure of the maid disappear at the top of the stair, and then he moved to the end of the hall and opened a door.

This let him into another room, where he found a hat quite unlike the one he usually wore.

Putting it on, he left the house by a way which admitted him to the back premises, and, less than two minutes later, he was on the street with eyes trained on the sidewalk in front of his residence.

It was not long before a figure came out of the shadows that hugged the wall, and Major Million saw that Jo had correctly given the sex of the spy.

The detective barely had time to step into a convenient area ere the watcher swept by.

She was muffled in a manner that prevented him from getting so much as a glimpse of her face though he could form a tolerable idea as to her figure.

"I have been tracked home and watched," mentally exclaimed the Magnate. "This has not been done by Leone, for your figure is not hers. The mistress of the plot—Salome herself, is taking an active hand in the game, and it behooves me to see where she goes."

The figure of the midnight spy was still in sight under the gaslight when the detective started in pursuit. If Salome, she was anxious to reach a certain goal, for she made rapid and very little noise as though her flying feet were incased in rubbers.

It soon became a chase whose destination became no mystery to the detective for he had guessed it long before Salome with a searching look behind her entered a house by means of a night-key.

He had tracked the night-spy home and settled her identity beyond question for she had entered the house where he knew Colonel Nolan lived.

To know this was not enough for the detective. He wanted to know more.

Almost simultaneously with Salome's disappearance beyond the door, a light in one of the front rooms increased in power.

It meant that she had joined some one there.

Major Million crossed the street below the

house and approached it with the caution of a practiced hound.

In front of the building several trees stretched their limbs toward the wall, and the change of season had not robbed them of their heavy coating of leaves.

Halting at one of the trees the detective looked at the window which was closely shuttered.

Near the top a bar of light told the story of a missing slat, and this was the place that claimed the major's attention.

In less than a minute after this discovery he had drawn his figure up into the tree and had ventured out on the main limb toward the house.

Parting the foliage of yellow leaves which were dark to him then, he looked into the room by means of the missing slat.

Fortunately the inside curtains were not close, as if the shutter was guard enough.

The nabob shadow believed that he was on the eve of an important discovery.

The whole interior of the room before him seemed to become visible through the narrow opening, and he saw revealed the face of the spy he had tracked.

A table occupied the middle of the apartment, and two men occupied it.

Salome, with her veil and hood discarded, stood near by talking rapidly while the men listened. One of the two held a poised pen in his hand and the sheet of paper before him told Major Million that Salome the Dark had disturbed him in the midst of some task.

It was above the poised pen that the detective saw the cunning face of Jupiter Jowl, the lawyer, and at his right the giant features of Colonel Nolan.

Salome leaned suddenly toward the table and took the sheet from beneath the lawyer's pen.

"This is all well enough, but we want some quick work of another kind done!" she exclaimed, raising her voice till the syllables came out to the spy among the leaves. "You must recollect, gentlemen, that I have followed the mandog of New York from Doctor Downly's house to his own! It was by accident that I discovered him, but I did not give up the chase till I had run him down. Lorain Downly has conferred with Major Million and has doubtless repeated to him the words he spoke in presence of the three doctors."

"My God! do you think so?" cried Colonel Nolan, falling back in his chair and giving Salome a look of anxiety which was amusing to the detective.

"Always afraid of something!" answered the woman, with sarcastic bitterness, as she turned to the colonel. "You would be a brave man to send out in the game with a desperate play to be made. Why, the shadow of possibilities makes you shake. What do you think of our friend Colonel Nolan, Mr. Jowl?"

As Salome really expected no reply from the lawyer, Jupiter Jowl merely smiled and kept his opinion, whatever it was, to himself.

"Yes, they have consulted—the young doctor and the detective," continued Salome. "I know what that means, if you don't."

"I think I do," said the colonel.

"Well?"

"It means that the deuce will be to pay if we don't balk them in some manner."

"If we don't!" retorted Salome, almost as sarcastically as before. "You don't presume that I am going to let the conference ripen, eh?"

"Of course not, madam," put in the lawyer.

"When Knute, who saw the scene between Lorain and the doctors and heard his words, stopped me under the lamp and told me all, a thrill went through me like the piercing of an arrow. 'What?' thought I, 'that young man in our way? If he had come up then I would have leaped at him like a tigress.'"

"I believe it," spoke Colonel Nolan, looking at the eyes that flashed like diamonds above the table.

"That's what I would have done!" continued Salome. "But as he was not there and my blood was hot, though my face was white from rage, I issued to Knute an order that consisted of two words: 'Kill him!'"

"The detective?" queried Colonel Nolan.

"No!—Lorain Downly! The words were hardly out of my mouth ere Knute vanished and I have not seen him since. I know, though, that he did not carry out the command, for it was afterward that I saw Major Million quit the house after an interview with the young man. I don't fear the boy doctor for what he may do, but I hate him for what he has done. He has given this sleuth-hound who rolls in wealth some information which has to be met with a play clothed in certain destruction. But you have tried twice to tell me something and I have interrupted. Now go on, Mr. Jowl."

The spider-lawyer of New York proceeded to acquaint Salome with the visit of Killis Kayne to his den, and closed with the story of the attempted burglary and the shooting of the burglar by Knute Knelson, and the wounded man's escape.

Salome listened without once interrupting the speaker. She dwelt on every word of the revelation with eager interest.

"The burglar was the young crook who has

the papers!" she exclaimed. "I wish you had dashed his pistol aside and robbed him. Do you think he was badly wounded?"

"I think Knute's bullet dangerously winged him," replied Jowl. "We tracked him some distance by drops of blood on the stones, but lost him at last."

"We will find him!" cried Salome. "Dead or alive, we will find the fox and get his treasure. But now for the nabob-shadow who threatens us! My dear colonel, in less than forty-eight hours you can come forth as the brother of Mayne Malcolm who is supposed to have been lost with the ship Golden Wing. We will have all the proofs by that time, won't we, Mr. Jowl?"

"You will, if perseverance and coolness ever wins," responded the lawyer.

Salome drew back and raised her hand while her face grew resolute.

"I am willing to swear it!" cried she. "I've played games just as deep as this, but not in this country. I've baffled the best man-hounds of the Old World, and when I swear with uplifted hand that within two days the millions of Mayne Malcolm shall pass into our clutches, I do so with a full knowledge of my power."

The two men gazed in silence at the beautiful speaker, and the millionaire Vidocq crept back and dropped noiselessly to the ground.

CHAPTER XX.

A BIT OF WOOING.

EARLY the next day—and it was not far off when Major Million left his perch in the tree—Janet, domiciled at Mrs. Postlewaite's on Leaf street, had a caller whom she did not recognize, he was muffled so, till he had glided into the hall.

There to her surprise he stood revealed as Knute Knelson, Mayne Malcolm's last attendant.

The girl had not seen him since she left the house with the treasure-box under her arm, and she was now much alarmed to think that he had found her.

"You've got a cozy place here. I like the house right well," said Knute before Janet could recover her self-possession, and he smiled as he knew how to do to disarm a young girl's suspicions.

"Didn't you like to stay where you were?" he went on. "You were nicely fixed in some respects, but the specter of sickness that inhabited the house wasn't a pleasant companion, that's a fact. I never got used to it, notwithstanding my duties. But it's all over, you know."

"Yes, I know that," replied Janet.

"And you're satisfied here?"

"I am."

She still wondered how Knute Knelson had found her out, but she did not intend to ask. He looked closely at her as she answered him and then resumed:

"Mayne Malcolm was a strange man, miss."

"A very strange one. And," added Janet, "his disease was a mystery. I think it puzzled Doctor Downly."

The cool-headed fellow started a little spite of his resolution and then broke into a light laugh. "And Doctor Downly is dead, too. Queer, isn't it?"

A pallor overspread the girl's face, and she caught Knute's eyes fastened on her which quickly brought the old and a deeper color back.

"What killed Doctor Downly?" she exclaimed.

"It was sudden death I guess," replied Knelson. "You haven't heard it, then?"

"No."

"The papers have given the news to the city. I thought of course that you had heard."

"My landlady takes no papers, and I have not been out."

Janet could not suppress a smile as she spoke the last part of the sentence, for it recalled the strict seclusion she had maintained ever since her flight.

"Do you ever intend to go back, miss?" queried Knelson with an eagerness which he could not conceal.

"Why should I? You have seen how I was treated by the strange man who took me under his roof, and now that he is dead why should I go back to that house?"

"Oh, you don't know how he left things," ejaculated Knute.

"He left nothing for me of course. I am not blood of his blood."

"Where did he get you anyhow. I've often thought of this, miss."

"I hardly know myself," replied Janet shrewdly, for she could see that Knute Knelson was driving at something in his own interest, and she did not want to fall into any trap set by him.

"I've heard of men doing stranger things than providing for their wards," said he.

Janet said nothing.

"I've left the place myself," continued Knute with a slight smile. "A nurse's work is done when the patient recovers or dies."

"Yes."

"Mine died."

The old smile which had vanished for a moment came back, and seemed to grow into a Satanic leer while Janet watched it.

Knute Knelson put up one of his hands and played with the lapel of his coat. The action, slight as it was, sent a nameless thrill through the young girl's frame.

She recalled how that same hand had given Mayne Malcolm his medicine during the long hours of his singular sickness, how its owner had watched over him like the hawk watches the agonies of the dying hare, and how he held whispered conversations with Salome the Dark in the room behind the curtains.

Of course the man whom he nursed had died!

"Do you expect to remain here?" suddenly asked Knute.

"I cannot say."

"But you won't move soon if at all."

"I am very nicely domiciled here," replied Janet to disarm suspicion.

"I would think so. Quiet place."

"It is always so here."

For a moment longer the dark eyes of the nurse were fixed on the girl, then he suddenly took a step toward her and lowered his voice.

"I've always been your friend, Janet, though, situated as I was in that house, I did not get to prove it," he went on. "You will need help sometime; I know not exactly when. You can depend on me."

"Of course I thank you," answered Janet. "But I feel capable of taking care of myself."

"All young girls think so," smiled Knute. "I've known some who found themselves mistaken. But you will not reject my proffer of friendship?"

"It is something one ought never to reject," rejoined Janet, "especially when one is in need."

"That is it. You may be in need. I tell you there are some things you do not know."

"A good many of them, perhaps."

Knute Knelson could have bitten his lips over the way Janet had of meeting his advances.

"Hang it all!" he said, to himself. "I'm making slow progress. The girl is a fortune, if I pull the right string. I know what's what, and, if I play my hand just right, I can feather my nest while others gnash their teeth."

"Do you know, miss, that the night you left home something besides Mayne Malcolm's death occurred in the house?" he inquired.

Janet professed astonishment by slightly shaking her head.

"Well, there did," he resumed. "It was something singular, too. It was a robbery."

The young girl could have guessed what was coming next, but she kept her composure in a manner that adroitly drew him on.

"I don't know exactly how it was done, but I think the thief had concealed himself in the house. He took that which was valuable in a certain sense. In short, he robbed Malcolm of some papers."

Janet made no reply.

"I was the first to discover the crime," Knute continued, after a pause. "I saw that the best way to catch the fellow would be to lay low, play your own hand, and keep away from the police and the detectives. They hunt with a brass hand too much to suit me. Well, I kept my own counsel, but I have not been idle. I've done better than the best city man-dogs could do."

"Did you recover the missing papers?"

"I have but to put out my hand for them," responded Knute, quickly.

"Which you will do, of course," exclaimed Janet. "The lawyer who has the settling of Mayne Malcolm's estate cannot do so without the papers if they are important ones."

"Important?" echoed the young fellow, his eyes getting an unnatural sparkle. "I should say they are important. By the way, Janet, did you ever see his will?"

"No."

"Nor the statement he wrote out during his sickness?"

"Nor the statement."

"Then, you don't know the value of the papers, sure enough. You ought to know something about his wealth."

"It was over a million."

"I should say so!" cried Knute. "Malcolm was richer than any one thought him. Now, what if I should place the missing papers in your hands?"

Janet's heart seemed to sweep into her throat. She knew nothing about Major Million's adventure with the Rover; she did not know that he had received the documents mentioned by Knute Knelson, for she had not seen him since his streak of luck.

"I am not the person to receive the papers," she replied to Knelson's last remark.

"Yes you are. They interest you."

"Me?"

"I know what I'm talking about!" persisted the young man. "I know what I can do if the proper inducement is given."

"I don't understand you," said Janet.

"I can make it a little plainer," he resumed.

"If the proper inducement is given I can make you one of the most noted women in New York. See here!" he caught her wrist like a hawk darts upon a field-mouse and seemed to sink his fingers to the bone. "We are alone, ain't we?"

Janet said "yes" almost without knowing what her reply was.

"Then, I'll come to the point at once!" he cried. "If you'll agree to become my wife, I'll keep my word—I'll make you the most noted woman in New York!"

The young girl fell back as far as his grasp would permit, and looked into his face in mute surprise.

"I mean it—every word—every syllable!" Knute Knelson went on, panting like a stag run down in his excitement. "I'm not so deep in some things but what I can cut loose and help whom I please. I can help you, Janet. I know where to find the crippled fox who has the papers. I know where his den is and how to get it. I risk a great deal in serving you; you could not appreciate my peril if I were to mention it. What do you say? I'm not bad. I can make you a queen of Gotham society, and those who would like to interfere, will have to stand back. Come, come, Janet! Shall it be a wife for a fortune?"

By this time Janet had recovered. She still felt the hand of Knute Knelson at her wrist; she saw his eyes blazing before her in the impetuosity of the moment, and a tide of repugnance and rage swept through her brain.

"Your wife?" she cried, breaking away in spite of his grip. "You come to the wrong person for a trade of the kind you have to offer. I advise you to serve your dark-skinned mistress to the end. The avenger is on the right trail, and the shadow of justice is at your heels."

And without another word, Janet walked away, leaving him alone.

CHAPTER XXI.

BURGLAR AND NURSE.

STUNNED by the girl's sudden departure, coupled with her last words, Knute Knelson stood for a few moments in the hallway where the interview had taken place.

"Don't I see that some one is ahead of me?" he exclaimed to himself. "I might have known it before, but it is very plain now. She won't become Mrs. Knelson, and she threw in a little grape as a wind-up. By Jove! she looked prettier than I ever saw her, and she's worth fighting for."

He walked to the door, but looked back before he opened it as if in hopes that Janet would reappear and give him a chance to renew his suit. But the young girl did not come from her retreat, and smothering his chagrin as best he could, he left the house.

"I'll succeed better next time. I've got nearly everything in my own hands. I know where lies the man I shot last night, and the papers he tried to sell to Jupiter Jowl are not far off. I'm fox enough to get them, and then I know too much for Salome to fight me when I have won Janet and the Malcolm fortune."

Did Knute intend to desert Salome the Dark and strike out for himself? It would require a cool, brave head to do this, but the nurse probably thought himself capable of succeeding.

He kept on through the city till he stopped and eyed a certain building with a great deal of curiosity.

It was a plain two-story structure, not unlike some by which it was surrounded.

"The man who has the documents is over there badly hurt," mused Knute. "He is watched by a young woman who is called his wife. He does not know who shot him for the corridor was dark and he did not see me when I fired. But I'll not make my play just now. I've got at her fish in the skillet. Salome wants me to deal with the young doctor and I'm rather anxious to pay him off for my failure with Janet this morning. Don't know that he is responsible for the whole thing? It doesn't take a man with two good eyes to see that."

Knute watched the house a while longer and saw a woman's face sad looking and white appear at one of the upper windows.

"That's his wife, Leone he calls her," he murmured, and then he sauntered away to bring up shortly afterward at a spot from which he could see Dr. Downly's house and the office attached to it.

He had not been on guard long when a young man came out.

"That is he!" exclaimed Knute. "I'm going to see what is on the boards now. He believes that the hand that dealt Mayne Malcolm a death-blow, wasn't far off when Doctor Downly settled his accounts with this world. That's what he told the doctors, anyhow."

Lorain Downly went almost direct to Mrs. Postlewaite's and Knute with eyes that flashed with rage saw the closing door hide him from view.

"Lost already!" thought he, in no good humor. "I can't go beyond that door now. I'll go back and see what the others have done."

As he turned into a certain street two blocks from the house, he caught sight of a face which was at once familiar.

It was Leone's and he had not seen it a second before it vanished.

Knute Knelson stopped at once.

"She's going away from him!" he cried. "She won't be apt to come back for some time. Why can't I make my play now?"

For the nurse to think thus was to act at once, and in less than a minute he was moving away in an opposite direction and almost on a run.

In a little while he was back in the quarter where stood the two-story house which he had watched a short time before.

A strange sense of quiet hung about the place, and there was no face at the window. Knute reconnoitered the surroundings with a good deal of care before he opened his mission.

Crossing the street he walked up to the door of the house and opened it gently.

He knew from the shape of the building that he would find a short hall and a stairway on the inside, and such proved to be the case.

The millionaire's nurse went up the steps with the noiseless tread of an Indian brave.

At the top he found a door on his right.

He leaned toward it and listened.

Presently there came to his ears the noise of a child.

"That's the little girl—they have one," muttered Knute.

As there was no response to the childish voice, Knelson ventured to turn the knob on which he had already laid his hand.

It yielded with less noise than he expected.

The following moment he crossed the threshold and looked round him.

Owing to some half curtains at the windows, the room was not very light, but he saw the low bed in one corner and noted the arrangement of several pieces of furniture.

"Is that you, Leone?" came from the couch in feeble tones. "You made a quick trip. Did you find the detective?"

The last words went through Knute like the plunge of a knife.

What detective? And why should the Rover send for the very sort of person he had been trying to avoid all his life?

A quick stride carried the villain-nurse across the room, and in a moment he was looking down into a face half-buried in the pillows.

There lay Killis Kayne, his victim—the man he had shot in the building occupied in part by Jupiter Jowl the lawyer.

There was no longer a doubt in his mind of the result of that shot.

The seal of death had been set on the Rover's face and the shadows of the awful passing soon to take place was over his eyes.

But his teeth set firmly the moment he saw Knelson, and with look for look the two men watched one another a few seconds.

"You had to follow me up," said the Rover, the first of the two to speak. "But you won't get anything here. I haven't got 'em."

Knute almost fell back from the bed.

"You haven't got what?" he cried.

"You know. I say, and it gives me pleasure, too, that they've passed from my hands."

There could be but one meaning to language of this kind, and Knute Knelson was the man to interpret it.

"You had to shoot me like a dog!" continued the Rover, sending the words out through clinched teeth.

"I?"

"Oh, yes, I know who did it, but I guess you won't make anything by it. I've appointed my executor and avenger."

Knute took a step forward, and leaned over the bed, his eyes full of a mad fire, which the Rover's words had kindled there.

"I don't care a whit for your avenger," cried he. "I'm more than a match for him, as he will discover before he plays his first card. You've got what I want. Don't tell me that you've given them up. You don't surrender documents for which you lately refused a cool five thousand."

"I say they're gone," repeated the young burglar.

"That is a thief's lie!"

Killis Kayne's face seemed to flush despite the death-set pallor there. A quiver of rage passed through his frame.

"Show me where they are!" commanded Knute.

His answer was a smile full of defiance and triumph.

"Won't you do it?" he went on, raising his hands till the young crook saw them in all their silkiness. "I'll choke you to death and then take them."

"You wouldn't succeed if you did," was the reply.

"That's the old lie," flashed Knute. "Are they under your pillow?"

He dived his hands beneath the burglar's pillow, and searched but found nothing.

"I told you so!" cried Killis Kayne. "You don't look in the right place for the papers!"

"Where are they?"

"Where they will do the right party some good!"

"Did you take them to—to the girl?"

"No."

"To whom, then?"

A smile came to the bloodless lips of the young crook.

"It is all a lie! They are in this house!" roared Knute.

"Find them!"

He looked madly at the wounded man a mo-

ment, and then bounding toward a child's crib near the bed, as if a sudden idea had struck him, he jerked from among a lot of coverings, a little girl, with rounded figure and golden hair.

Killis Kayne gave vent to a cry of horror, when he saw the little one in the robber's grip.

"She's yours, eh?" inquired Knelson, holding Pearl at arm's length.

"She is ours," was the response.

"You love her?"

"As my life!"

"Then, give me the documents."

"What will you do if I do not?"

Knute straightened and threw the form of the child above his head, where he held it in triumph and with the grip of a vise.

"What will I do, eh?" cried he, throwing a look at the crook. "By the God of heaven, if you don't surrender the papers to me, I'll throw the child against the wall with all my strength!"

"You're a merciless villain!"

Knute Knelson burst into a laugh.

"That's just what I am!" he exclaimed. "I play bold games for big stakes. What do you say?"

"I can't give you the documents."

"You stole them."

"They have been in my hands."

"I thought so! They are in your hands today."

"They are not."

"Come, come! Tell the truth. I know why you want to hold your prize. You think there is money in the game. But I am going to have the best hand all along. Now, the papers or the throw against the wall!"

Knute Knelson's hand seemed to tighten on the little one. The grip drew a cry of pain from Pearl's throat.

"I count three," cried Salome's spy, glancing at the man on the bed. "I'll give you a second after each number. One!"

The helpless man shut his teeth hard and glared at the scoundrel in the middle of the room.

"Two!"

The silence that followed could have been broken by the fall of a pin.

"Three!"

Knute looked from Pearl to her father; his hands drew the child back for the fatal throw.

All at once, as if impelled upward by the explosion of a bomb beneath him, Killis Kayne bounded from the bed.

Pearl's danger seemed to give him new life, and, for the moment, the strength of a Hercules.

With a mad cry he cleared the distance between the bed and the nurse, and before Knute could carry his infernal project into effect he had the hand of a dying man at his throat, and the child had fallen from his clutches.

It was like the launching of a thunderbolt, was the Rover's spring, and as Knute staggered back with ten fevered fingers in his throat, he would have given the papers themselves to have been on the street.

He caught Killis Kayne and tried to tear him loose. He exerted all his strength with the room swimming before his eyes in a crazy whirl, and at last, dropping his hands suddenly, he gave up to the darkness of unconsciousness.

The pet scheme of Salome's spy had failed, and when he fell loose from the grip of the death-struck burglar, Killis Kayne dropped back and lay still.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FOX HAS HIS DAYS NUMBERED.

IF Salome's tool and spy had known that the prize he sought had passed beyond the Rover's possession, he would not have descended upon him in the manner described in the foregoing chapter. On the contrary he would have kept aloof and thus avoided the dying burglar's clutch.

A wild scene was presented to a pale-faced woman when she opened the door of that room a few minutes after the end of the struggle.

With a piercing cry she sprang forward and knelt over the Rover to whom the child had crept for protection.

The woman was not alone and the man who had followed gave his attention to the unconscious would-be-robber lying near the door.

Knute Knelson found himself in a strange-looking little room when recollection returned.

He had to think twice and then he knew where he was.

"Who brought me here?" he demanded of a man who looked in upon him through an iron-barred opening.

"You came through the regular channel," was the reply accompanied by a smile.

"What is the charge?"

"Assault with intent to rob and kill."

A pall of overspread Knute's face.

"Is he dead?" he asked.

"I don't know any thing about it, sir."

"Who turned me over to the police?"

"I wasn't on duty here when you came in."

The man in the cell bit his lip and turned away while at the same time the face at the door disappeared.

"I've got this for my pains," growled Knute, gazing at his surroundings. Killis Kayne did the unexpected when he flew at me like a tiger.

All earth couldn't have loosened his grip, for it was the grip of the dying. I wonder if Salome and the colonel will hear of my arrest? I won't get to make my play for Janet and the fortune unless good luck unlocks the door of this cage within a few hours. I played the mad hot-headed fool that's what I've done—and Major Million will have things his own way from now on!"

The last reflection was not a pleasant one for Knute Knelson held from the streets as he was by the lock of a prison cell. He settled back into the darkest corner and nursed his chagrin in silence.

Once he thought of sending out for Jupiter Jowl, who was full of schemes of all sorts. If anybody could get him out of duance, the spider lawyer could, but on mature reflection, he decided to let things take their present course for awhile.

He did not know that it was Major Million who had handed him over to the authorities, nor that the nabob detective had turned his attention to other game.

Mayne Malcolm's house had been shut up since his death. The blinds were drawn, and the rooms were dark and silent.

One used to the place could have seen with very little imagination the spectacle presented so long in one of the rooms. There in his padded chair, the rich man had died of the mysterious disease which had baffled the scientific skill of Dr. Downly. To that room Salome had come with the cat-like tread and the silken hand. She had bent over the patient day after day, watching with eyes that fairly glittered, the progress of the fatal disease which no human skill could arrest.

All this was over now, and the darkened room contained for those familiar with these scenes only the specters of the past.

It was while Knute Knelson was growling in his cell at the station-house that the curtains between Malcolm's death-chamber and the nurse's apartment were drawn aside, and a man stepped into the former.

It was Major Million, the city man-hound.

He turned on the gas just a little, and surveyed the room for a minute.

Something had brought him back to the house, but what?

After a brief inspection of the apartment, he withdrew, shutting off the gas as he did so, and letting the curtains fall back to their proper places.

Five minutes later he reappeared in a chamber on the second floor.

It was a small room sometimes occupied by Malcolm before his last sickness.

It had a small book-case in one corner, and below it a desk with a multiplicity of drawers and pigeon-holes.

Opening this piece of furniture with a key, which he found in a certain book, which he took from one of the shelves, he was soon engaged in going through its contents.

The sharp eyes of the detective let nothing escape them, and his hand went from place to place with mingled swiftness and celerity.

At last he found a packet, from which, among other things, he drew a photograph.

It was the portrait of a man who looked somewhat like Mayne Malcolm as he looked when in health, but the close observer could see that the face on the card was not his.

After studying the picture for a few seconds, the detective turned it over, and read on the card the written words:

"Nicholas Malcolm. Supposed to have been lost at sea with the Ocean Wing in 1860."

Then beneath this was another sentence, written apparently at some later date, for the ink was blacker and fresher.

It read:

"I have my doubts. He was seen—if I can believe trustworthy people—in 1862."

Of course the second entry on the card referred to the man mentioned in the first.

The detective transferred the photograph to his pocket with an air of triumph, and then closed the desk, as if he had found the object of his search.

As he stepped into the corridor that lay beyond the door, he stopped abruptly. No sound had startled him, but his eyes had detected the presence of a light—a soft and subdued one—on the floor below.

The detective for a moment was confounded.

He had darkened the rooms he had lately vacated, and the only light that could penetrate them came in long, thin streaks through the blinds.

Was there some one in the house besides himself?

Major Million glided down the carpeted steps, and entered the room lately occupied by Knute Knelson, in his double capacity of nurse and spy.

He now saw that the curtains he had drawn together were parted and that the light he had seen come from Malcolm's room.

Somebody was there!

The nabob detective tip-toed to the arras and looked forward.

The gas was on, showing every particle of furniture in the chamber. The bed had been

pulled from the wall and the table had been rolled to the center of the room.

It no longer held the vials and glasses which had once been Malcolm's horror.

As Major Million gazed, wondering what had become of the person who had turned on the gas, a figure rose slowly from behind the head of the bed and stood in full view.

Men less cool than the detective would have betrayed themselves by a cry, but he sealed his lips and looked.

A tall and handsome woman stood before him. The shape of her figure would have revealed her identity even if he had not seen her face.

Salome the Dark had come back to the home of her supposed victim.

She had come with prying eyes and searching fingers, with the step of the pantheress and the cunning of the serpent.

There was something thrilling in the presence of that woman in that solemn room. Her eyes had a glitter which sometimes they wanted, and Major Million could see that bitter disappointment had rewarded her.

She stood for a moment near the table as if to give the detective ample time to study her, then she rolled the bed back and restored the table to its place.

The next moment she put her hand up and turned off the gas, leaving the room in almost Cimmerian darkness.

The nabob Vidocq drew back just in time, for the curtains were suddenly parted and a figure which he could not see swept through the room!

Salome was gone, but not from the house.

A minute afterward the detective heard her on the stair, and his trained ear followed her step by step till he knew that she had entered the room he had just vacated.

The door was carefully closed behind Salome, but a light that escaped at the transom told where she was.

Marl Montiboy left the curtained chamber and ascended to the landing above.

He heard the rustle of papers in the room beyond the door at which he halted.

Quick as thought he caught the cross-piece above his head and drew himself up.

Salome was at the desk, the same old glitter in her eyes and the old-time expression of eagerness on her dark face.

He watched her go from drawer to drawer and from one pigeon-hole to another. He did not seem to breathe while he hung along the door with his watchful eyes following every movement of the silken hands.

"Not here!" suddenly exclaimed Salome, falling back from the desk as she shut it with a bang. "Basil says he saw it once in this desk with two inscriptions on the back—both in Mayne Malcolm's hand. I haven't missed any place where one ought to run across it. It cannot have fallen into the hands of the enemy, for the enemy has not been here since. If I thought—"

Salome checked herself and brought one of her clinched hands down upon the desk with vehemence while her color brightened.

"I say if I thought the trail-fox with the millions—the Monte Cristo Vidocq as Knute calls him—had found it I'd go straight to him and make an end of the whole matter. I'm going to do that anyhow and as I promised them, within forty-eight hours from a certain time. But I would like to have found the picture. If I had been in Basil's place I wouldn't be looking for it now."

She seemed to spring at the books on the shelves as if a sudden idea had taken possession of her.

Major Million watched her go through them one after another, but each volume was a disappointment.

At last Salome turned from the book-case and the face at the transom dropped out of sight.

In another second the light in the little room went out, and as the detective crowded himself into the darkest corner at hand, unseen feet went down the stair and died away in the gloom beyond.

He waited at the balustrade to hear them more, but instead there came up through the darkness the voice of Salome:

"I'm tired of this!" she said. "From this hour the days of the man-hunter of New York are numbered! I'll strangle the fox! Then—victory!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MAN IN GOGGLES ONCE MORE.

"Yes, my beautiful viperess!" laughed Major Million, as the sound of a closing door was borne up to him. "If you can strangle the fox, well and good; but be careful, while you are about it, that he does not outwit you."

A few minutes later the detective of Gotham threw into Janet's lap a photograph which the young girl recognized with a light cry.

"Is that the one, Janet?" he inquired.

"It is," was the reply.

"The same one you once found on Mayne Malcolm's desk up-stairs with the ink not dry on the back of it?"

"Yes."

"And do you think that the man called Colonel Nolan resembles the face on that card?"

"Of course he does not."

Major Million smiled.

"Within a few hours, if the will of this viper in silk is not thwarted, Malcolm's long-lost brother will appear. No one in New York can swear that Naseby Nolan is not that brother. He has on hand a plausible story about the name he bears now. He will say that the real Nicholas Malcolm was not lost on the Ocean Wing, that he did not sail on the ill-fated vessel, and that, having changed his name for a purpose, he now comes forth in his true dress, the brother and sole heir of the dead."

"The impostor!" exclaimed Janet, an indignant flash in her eyes.

"Of course," continued the detective. "You recollect the paper which Jupiter Jowl drew up for Malcolm a short time before his death?"

"The one Salome witnessed?"

"The same. Malcolm entrusted it to the lawyer believing, dupe that he was, that the spider-attorney had some honest blood in his veins. Well, that paper, which declares that Nicholas Malcolm is of such a high complexion and weight, has been cleverly forged, signatures and all. As it stands now, it proclaims Colonel Nolan to be Nicholas Malcolm, the lost, and armed with it, at the proper time the big plotter will play his hand."

The young girl had listened to the detective with a white face and quivering lips.

"I care not for myself," she cried. "I can go through life and murmur not, even though that which is of right mine never gilds my palms. But I want these people baffled, I want the cord to strangle the guilty, for this game, as you have unearthed it, is the most infamous one I ever heard of."

"It has no equal in the annals of crime," answered Major Million. "Salome the Dark is going to the greatest lengths and through the coolest performances to succeed. See what a net she has thrown over all whom she controls. Colonel Nolan, a coward at heart, is her abject slave; Jupiter Jowl, the money shark, would sell his soul at her command, and Basil and Knute are her pliant tools. Why, she sealed Doctor Downly's lips by the lifting of her finger, and then—"

"And then killed him!" exclaimed the girl.

"You agree with Lorain," returned the detective. "At any rate, the arts learned in Italy have found a field of operation here in New York. The dead are dead; the living are the ones from whom vengeance must come. I will not forget the words I heard to-day in the darkness of the closed house. 'The days of the fox are numbered,' Salome says. I am the fox, Janet."

Mrs. Postlewaite's fair boarder came up to the detective and touched him gently as she leaned toward him and looked into his face.

"Don't give the viper a chance," she pleaded.

"I would not have a drop of your blood lost for all there is in this drama of dark intrigue. Your life is worth as much to those whom you are serving as it is to you yourself. But you know this woman and the tools she uses. I need not say, beware!"

"We will keep the trail with open eyes, girl," rejoined the millionaire Vidocq with a fearless laugh. "Salome does not dream that she has warned me with her rattle as the rattlesnake sometimes prepares his victim for his fangs. She did me good service in the old house, and I shall profit by it. I am now going to call on an old friend of ours."

"Lorain?" queried Janet with a mantling blush.

"No, Jupiter Jowl," replied the detective, smiling to note the quick change in the girl's look.

"He will not like to see you," she quickly responded.

"Perhaps not. I want to see how the old fellow is getting along, and one or two other things."

Just half an hour later Major Million, in goggles and looking quite unlike his natural self, mounted the same steps down which but a few hours before Killis Kayne had made a dash for life, to get a bullet through his body.

The day had passed noon and the slanting sun was throwing across the leaves in the parks the lengthening shadows of the trees.

There was a hum of business in the streets, but on the more quiet stairway the detective's tread sent forth a positive sound.

He went up the bare corridor to the lawyer's door which was adorned with a tin sign bearing his name and business.

Without knocking the nabob-ferret opened the door and entered.

Jupiter Jowl was at home, but he was not alone.

Near the table where he wrote sat a young girl in plain clothes watching him as his brown hand flew over a brief with a scratching noise.

There was genteel poverty in the girl's looks and habiliments, and she seemed to hold her breath while she waited for the lawyer to get through.

All of a sudden Jupiter made at the bottom of

the sheet two quick strokes which really meant his autograph, then folding the document rapidly, he pushed it toward his client and said:

"Five dollars, miss."

The girl fell back and looked at the legal shark.

"Five dollars. We can't give our time for nothing," continued Jupiter, in the same cold strain.

The client smothered her feelings and drew forth a handkerchief from one corner of which she slowly took some money.

Up to this time the spider-lawyer had not seen his new visitor, for the door for once had opened without a squeak, and the detective had come in without noise.

The five dollars were pushed toward the lawyer, and the girl taking up the paper, placed it in her bosom.

As she turned to go Jupiter Jowl saw Major Million for the first time, and his surprise showed itself in his stare of wonder.

The girl glided out unseen by the lawyer, and as he greeted the city Vidocq his face brightened for a moment with a broad smile of expectation.

"That sort of clients are more trouble than they're worth," said Mr. Jowl, nodding his head toward the door. "We have to do their work for almost nothing. But of course you understand, sir."

The detective replied that he happened to know that lawyers were very much troubled with clients who were poor pay, and ended by asking Mr. Jowl if his caller was not a working girl.

"A machine-girl," he answered. "She wanted me to draw up an article of agreement to present to her proposed landlady. She wishes to rent a room, and wants everything ironclad. A dollar isn't a decent price for anything nowadays, and she would have demurred to that, if she had not seen that I wasn't inclined to give all my time to charity."

Major Million's blood almost boiled at this piece of cool lying in the face of the facts. He had seen the lawyer force five dollars from the poor girl for a bit of work which had not taken ten minutes of his time. His hands itched to choke the rascal over his own table.

It was evident that Jupiter Jowl entertained no suspicions as to the identity of his visitor, though the detective underwent a searching scrutiny when he took a chair.

"I want but a bit of your time," he began, "not as much, perhaps, as the machine-girl took up."

"I'm at your service," put in Jupiter.

"My name is Tazewell."

The lawyer made a note of it on the sheet which lay to his hand.

"My home is in Jersey, but I am here in search of my cousin who, if I am not mistaken, came to the city a good many years ago and got well off."

The pencil made another item.

"His name was Malcolm," continued Major Million, and at mention of the name Jupiter Jowl gave a little start.

"He must have got rich, sure enough, for the Tazewells are pretty well fixed; but he never let us hear from him after he left Jersey. I understand that a certain Mr. Malcolm died the other day—I got onto this since landing in York—and I'd like to know something about him. He had a brother Nicholas, who went to Styx pretty rapidly after he came back from the Old World."

The effect of these words, which seemed a revelation, on the New York lawyer, was something startling.

He drew back as if a sudden light had flashed in his face, and it was several moments before he recovered his breath.

"Did you know Nicholas Malcolm very well?" he asked.

"I've seen him," replied the false Mr. Tazewell.

"After he came back from Europe?"

"Yes, after that."

"How long has he been dead?"

Jupiter Jowl waited anxiously for the detective's reply.

"Dead, did you say? Who said he was dead?" exclaimed Major Million.

The lawyer's face got ghastly.

"I—I thought you said he went to Styx after he came back," he stammered.

"I did. You quote me correctly, Lawyer Jowl. A man can go to Styx nowadays, and still, physically speaking, be worth a dozen dead men!"

"Oh, excuse my misappropriation of your term," hurriedly put in the lawyer. "You have already somewhat interested me in the two Malcolms. By the way, where is Nicholas now?"

There was a good deal of eagerness in this last question.

"He was in lower Jersey when we heard from him last."

"When was that?"

"Some five years ago."

"How was he fixed then?"

"He wasn't a millionaire, I can tell you!"

"No?"

"He was on his last pins besides. I'm speaking of the physical man now."

"In bad health?"

"Yes."

"Married?"

"No."

A placid smile came over the lawyer's leathery face.

"Do you think he has held out this long?" he inquired.

"I rather calculate that Nick Malcolm's dead."

The detective's reply seemed balm for Jupiter Jowl's fears.

CHAPTER XXV.

HERCULES PLAYS COWARD.

It was clear that much of the city detective's pretended story was a revelation to Jupiter Jowl.

The yarn about the residence of Nicholas Malcolm in Jersey fell upon his ears like a thunderbolt from a clear sky. While this man lived there was danger of losing the whole game.

Colonel Nolan, who in a short time would step forth as the dead millionaire's next of kin, might find his happiness suddenly cut short by the appearance of the true Nicholas Malcolm.

But if the brother was dead, there could be no fears in this direction.

The lawyer did not deem it best to make too pointed an investigation, so he drifted away from the subject nearest his heart, and began to question the supposed Mr. Tazewell about other things.

After awhile, however, he came back to Nicholas Malcolm in a shrewd, roundabout way.

"How long did you think Nick Malcolm could hold out when you saw him last?" he queried after beating about the bush some time.

"Probably three months," rejoined the detective.

"That was five years ago?"

"About."

"What did he look like?"

"He was a slender man, rather good-looking, had dark brown eyes, rather large."

"Not a very good portrait of the colonel," thought Mr. Jowl.

When he had pumped Major Million to his satisfaction he wound up the interview by saying that the Malcolm who had died was in all probability no relative of the Tazewells. The detective took this for the final settlement of the vexed question and soon afterward bowed himself out, leaving with the spider-lawyer a ten-dollar bill which Jupiter thought he had extracted from a genuine Jerseyman besides possessing himself of some valuable information.

"I must see Salome," exclaimed Jupiter Jowl seizing his hat and rushing from the office before the detective could have gone half a block. "A telegram from Green Chester will get something positive. I won't tell the colonel though. The thought of a living Nick Malcolm would frighten him out of his boots. Salome is the cool head with whom to consult."

The lawyer did not know that he was shadowed from the very door of his den to a certain house on a distant street.

He went up the steps with the eagerness of a boy and without waiting to ring the bell bolted into the hall.

He found in a well-furnished parlor a dark-faced woman in the act of giving a young man some instructions.

The woman was Salome, her companion Basil Belfort, the private secretary.

Jupiter betrayed his mission before he opened his mouth.

Salome calm at all times looked at him with a faint smile at her lips.

"You have some news," said she.

"I have. It was unexpected," and the lawyer glanced at Basil as if he wished him out of the room.

In another moment the young man was out of the way.

"Now, go on," continued Salome.

Jupiter Jowl was only too eager to proceed.

"What did you think when you heard the man's revelation?" she asked at the end of the lawyer's narrative.

"I felt like sinking through the floor," was the reply.

Salome laughed and succeeded in drawing a sickly grin from her friend.

"What do you propose?" she went on.

"I think we had better telegraph."

"To whom?"

"To Nicholas Malcolm, Green Chester. If he is dead we will know it."

"What would you say?"

"We can arrange the telegram to suit the occasion."

Salome did not speak for a moment.

"No. We will play our hand as we hold it and telegraph afterward if necessary."

"Isn't that a trifle risky?" ventured Jupiter.

"Yes, but we stop at no risks," was the quick response. "I believe that the photograph which Basil saw in Malcolm's desk is lost or destroyed. I have been to the house. I have searched every corner. It can't be found. I have said that

within forty-eight hours from a certain time we would be 'solid.'"

"Yes."

"Well, the time has not expired. I have just set a trap for the fox."

Jupiter started.

"For Major Million?" he exclaimed.

"For the detective-Croesus of Gotham!" answered Salome through her teeth.

"You want no failure, madam."

The eyes before Jupiter Jowl flashed indignantly.

"When have I failed?" she cried, putting out her hand. "When has that hand struck without return? I never fail, Jupiter Jowl. You sometimes come short of your expectations in your law cases, I never! The trap I have set for Major Million will not fail to hold the quarry."

"Where is Knute?"

Jupiter Jowl seemed to put the question as it entered his mind.

"I don't know. The young man has not turned up for some time. He has a duty to perform."

"He promised me to find the missing documents which the wounded burglar carried off."

"Yes, and he is also to look after the young doctor who says that Doctor Downly did not take his own life. I wonder if Lorain wants to take the trail himself? He'll find it a very short one if he does. We are too much for him, Jupiter."

Salome went to the mirror and pushed back her dark tresses. At the same time she could not help looking at the lawyer's face as it was reflected in the glass.

The eyes were fastened on her in a sort of mute admiration, and the lawyer's body was bent slightly forward in a spasm of eagerness which he could not control.

Salome left the mirror and wheeled upon her companion so suddenly that he started back from the table, and a guilty flush mantled his temples.

"Come back at ten to-night," said Salome.

"I will have good news for you by that time."

"Will you be here alone?"

"I will."

"Then, of course I'll come," and without further words the lawyer left Salome to herself and went back to his den.

"She really hates Colonel Nolan," said Jupiter to himself while he walked along. "The secretary is too much of a boy for her, and she never did like Knute. I don't see why I shouldn't put my card in at the right place. By Jove! Salome and I could perfect the most dazzling schemes if she should not find Malcolm's money enough for her. Really, I think the colonel will rejoice to get shut of her, for he fears her power. I'm going to feather my nest in more ways than one, and if I feather it with a brilliant creature like Salome, why, I'll be the luckiest man in this big game."

He had barely seated himself at his table ere the door opened, and who should walk in but Colonel Nolan.

Jupiter Jowl eyed the Hercules of the game with a look of astonishment.

What had brought the big man from his retreat to the office?

Nolan came forward and seemed to fall all in a heap on a chair.

"I'm going away!" were his first words, blurted out in a manner that startled the lawyer.

"How now, colonel?"

"I want to get out of this infernal scheme!"

He leaned across the table, and his voice dropped into a whisper.

"Don't you think we are going to win?" put Jupiter, in eager tones.

Colonel Nolan took a long breath.

"I don't like to have a dog after me," said he.

"A dog?"

"Yes—a man-hound! I can't go out but what I see the shadow of a jail in my path. I don't look like Nicholas Malcolm—"

"But what does the statement say?" interrupted Jupiter Jowl.

"I know, but it isn't what he wrote."

"The deuce! who can prove that it isn't?"

"The detective."

"He can't do any thing of the kind!" cried the lawyer.

"Besides this, we have lost the will and the statement which the young thief held back when he sold me the box."

"Knute is now on their trail and ere this they are in his hands."

These words did not seem to reassure Colonel Nolan.

"I wouldn't tell Salome for the world what I've decided on," the big man resumed. "You know why, or at least you ought to know. I'm not as brave as I ought to be. She put a good deal of her enthusiasm and magnetism into me, but that man-hound has taken it out. I'm going to be fair with you, Mr. Jowl. I'm a miserable coward!"

Colonel Nolan needed not to have made this confession. Jupiter Jowl had discovered this before. He knew that the man whom Salome had wrapped round her finger for purposes of

her own was a coward who feared the faintest shadow of a prison.

"Don't argue with me," Colonel Nolan went on as the lawyer was about to speak. "I will be miles away before night."

"You will be in this city, sir!" exclaimed Jupiter, his eyes getting a mad flash as he bent forward and eyed Nolan like a tiger. "You can't leave the game at your own sweet will. We don't propose to have you block proceedings just when the last trump is about to be thrown. I thought you knew better than this."

"It seems to me that the last trump is slow in coming down," stammered the giant coward pale about the mouth.

"It falls to-night."

"Who says so?"

"Salome."

At mention of the woman's name Nolan seemed to give a quick start.

"I wish I'd never seen her! To tell the truth, I call it the most unlucky meeting of my life."

"The one with her?"

"Yes."

"Why didn't you break years ago?"

"I couldn't. You can't realize the spell she uses."

"Where did you first meet her?"

"In Italy."

"Before she ever saw Mayne Malcolm?"

"It was before she thought of this piece of work."

Jupiter Jowl was seen to study Colonel Nolan before he put another question.

"Then, I presume, you'd have no objection to surrendering all claims on her?" said he, in the most insinuating tones.

"My God! No!" cried Colonel Nolan. "Do you want Salome, sir? Take her and welcome! She's got the coolest eyes and the deadliest claws of any tigress I ever saw. Take her and let me go. You say that the last card will be played to-night. Salome says so, eh?"

"She does."

"What is to follow the fall of that card?"

"The end of the detective's trail."

"That will make three!" exclaimed Colonel Nolan.

"It will put the last obstacle out of our way to the Malcolm millions."

The Hercules leaned back in his chair and looked blankly at the wall for a few moments.

"I wish I could cut the cords that bind me to Salome," he suddenly said. "I don't see why she ever picked on me for her scheme. I'm a coward when there is a detective about. For God's sake let me get away between now and night—"

"You remain here!" broke in the stern voice of Jupiter Jowl, and as Colonel Nolan caught the full import of the sentence, he shut his teeth hard and muttered:

"There is one way of escape still left, and by the eternal! I won't be a coward then!"

The lawyer did not hear this.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SALOME BAITS THE TRAP.

SALOME was alone in a luxuriously-appointed room into which the bright daylight was filtered through rich lace curtains.

It was some time after her interview with Jupiter Jowl, but on the same day.

There was a smile of confidence on the olive face of the beautiful woman, and her flying thoughts seemed to lend animation to her wonderful eyes.

"I can't think that I shall not catch him!" she suddenly exclaimed, talking aloud. "I would not fail for the world. What! lose this fortune by failing to entrap the detective? No! that must not be indulged for a second."

She seated herself at the table in the middle of the room and got writing materials ready.

As she touched the pen to the sheet before her a door at the left hand side of the room opened with a slight noise, and a child of fifteen made her appearance.

"Are you ready, miss?" asked the little one.

"Not yet," answered Salome. "Come again in—say, in five minutes."

The head vanished.

Then for several moments Salome bent herself assiduously to the task before her.

She suddenly ceased writing, tore up her work and recommenced again.

"The bait must suit the fox or he will not come," she smiled. "It must be so many words and no more. One too many might block the whole game."

She wrote again more thoughtfully than before, and read her letter with an expression of approval.

The chirography was totally unlike her own, and the shrewdest experts would have laughed at the thought of the letter being hers.

Salome placed her work in a plain but heavy envelope and sealed it carefully. Then she touched a call-bell on the table and the girl appeared again.

"I'm ready now," observed Salome holding the letter between her dainty fingers. "You have not forgotten a word of your instructions have you, Neva?"

"Not a word," echoed the little lips.

"What are you to do?"

"I am to take the letter to the door and deliver it to the maid, if the gentleman is in. If he is not home, I am to bring it back."

"That is it exactly," exclaimed Salome. "Now, here is the letter. Where do you put it? In the bosom of your dress? See that every button catches. Now do your duty to the letter."

The girl left the room again and Salome put the writing materials away.

"Having sent the bait abroad now let me set the trigger," she murmured. "Salome is not to appear in this play till the victim is hopelessly caught. She remains in the background till the fly entangled in the web is ready for the spider's poison."

She retired from the parlor but soon returned bearing in her hands a little box which she placed on the table.

Opening it with a tiny key, she took out several long strips of zinc which she placed side by side under the carpet between the table and the door. These strips she connected with each other by five wires which could not be seen by any one standing over them.

The box seemed inexhaustible as Salome drew from its contents, and when she checked herself at last, it was impossible for any person to enter the room without treading on the network of wires which overspread the carpet and connected with the zinc strips beneath.

Salome's concluding performance was to run an almost impalpable wire from the strips underneath a door that opened into another room. There it met a coil of wire under a table, and the closest observer might have seen that an end of the coil lay somewhere beyond this apartment.

There was death—instant death—in every inch of the wires thus planted by this cool tigress of two continents.

Somewhere in the house lay the electric motive power of the terrible trap to which Major Million, the millionaire Vidocq had been invited by one of the most adroitly-coined letters ever written in the history of woman's villainy.

Somewhere Salome's hand would be at the right moment to lurch at her victim the death-current of the unseen battery. She would be ready at the proper signal to touch the button which was to put an end to the detective's career, thus throwing forever from the pathway of the conspiracy the one great obstacle to its success.

She calculated how long it would take little Neva to go to and return from Major Million's house.

If she did not find the ferret at home, why she could be sent back after an interval with the same decoy letter.

Salome waited nearly an hour, and saw the sun sink behind the roofs beyond the windows.

She grew impatient, casting furtive and anxious glances at the clock that ticked on the mantle, and ever and anon looking toward the door.

She thought how secretly she had rented that house some time before. No one knew of the transaction, for this was the one great secret which she had kept from her associates.

Here under another name she had lived at times, venturing out now and then to visit Mayne Malcolm as Salome, and to consult with those who were her tools.

Her dual life was one of the secrets of the game for the Malcolm millions. It was that part of her which Colonel Nolan knew nothing about, and Knute Knelson, who had studied her from every standpoint, had failed to discover this retreat.

Neva the girl had been her sole companion at this strange house, but the child was not always there. She knew when to come and when to go, but she did not dream that her mistress was other than the person she represented herself to be.

Let us follow the girl and see, while Salome finishes her trap, the success or failure of her mission.

It was not long before the child appeared in the vicinity of Major Million's house.

She looked carefully at the numbers of the buildings as she went along and when she came to a certain one attached to the transom of an elegant house she turned and went up the steps.

It happened that when Neva rung a burst of sunshine clothed the portal in a golden light and remained there.

She did not have to wait long, for there soon sounded footsteps in the hall and Jo the maid opened the door.

"Is the gentleman in?" asked Neva touching the corner of the letter in her bosom.

"Do you want him?" was the query that greeted the girl's question.

"But you don't answer me!" exclaimed Neva with a show of spirit.

Was it a suspicion of foul play that made Jo recoil a step at this moment? With her eyes still studying Salome's messenger she threw her hand carelessly as it seemed to the wall at her left and touched a button there.

In an instant a little camera fixed in the wall at the end of the hallway was brought to bear on the petite figure on the door-step and Neva was caught.

"No, the gentleman is not in," answered Jo

after her success. "Have you a message for him?" and the maid held out her hand, but the girl drew back.

"I will come again. When could I see him?"

"I cannot say."

"Before the sun goes down, do you think?"

Jo shook her head at the little messenger's persistence.

Neva's hand dropped from the letter she had touched and Jo saw the corner of it in her bosom.

"You couldn't leave the message with me, could you?" she inquired.

"No, indeed," replied Neva. "I am to give it to the gentleman himself, or to send it in by you if I had found him at home."

She left the steps before Jo could further interrogate her, and in another moment, without once looking back, she was on her way home.

"He will not come for an hour, if he comes then!" exclaimed Major Million's faithful Jo. "I don't like this strange piece of work. He has told me enough to know that he is now engaged in fighting a great conspiracy of some kind. They had him once in a trap, from which his escape was miraculous. People who bring letters hither for him, always leave them with me for him if he is not at home; but this child has other orders. From whom? From the party who sprung the other trap on him? Heaven helping me, I am going to follow the child to her master."

It did not take Jo long to appear in the street somewhat disguised with bonnet and shawl.

Her eyes were on the alert for Neva.

Presently she caught sight of the girl, and quickened her steps.

Neva did not appear to have the least suspicion that she was followed.

Jo kept at her heels through the lengthening shadows, and tracked her from street to street till she entered the house where Salome, almost devoured by impatience, awaited her return.

Of course, Major Million's maid could not get beyond the threshold of that house.

She would have given life itself almost to have seen beyond the carved door with the heavy bronzed knocker.

"Well, I can tell him something," muttered Jo, drawing back with a disappointed air. "I may be able to put him on his guard. I would like to know who sent the girl with the message, but the face in the camera may tell a story of enlightenment for him."

The detective's maid went back.

A certain eagerness, born of intense loyalty to the master she served, lent speed to her limbs.

She could not get along fast enough.

The city shadow might come home, and depart again during her absence. She could not bear to think of that.

All at once Jo found herself in the middle of the most dangerous street-crossing on her homeward route. She had watched her opportunity, and at a certain moment had darted forward through a narrow opening between the surging vehicles.

But in a flash as it were the pathway ahead had become closed.

The poor excited and breathless girl seemed to see nothing but a terrible death before her.

Suddenly she turned back, but retreat had been cut off!

An instant to Jo was an hour of agony.

In the horror of the moment she started forward again and sent out a wild cry for safety. It sounded above the din of carts and the loud shouts of drivers.

All at once a heavy tongue struck the girl's shoulder. She reeled with another cry and threw up her hands, but too late.

The following second she was down under a pair of horses, and a stalwart policeman was fighting his way to where she lay!

The scene we have described did not seem to occupy half a minute.

The blue-coat clubbed a pathway to the prostrate girl and snatched her from the stones bleeding about the face and lifeless.

Of course nobody of the gaping hundreds who swarmed round recognized the unfortunate maid and she was taken away in the hospital wagon.

And while a surgeon dressed her hurts and pronounced her in a bad way, Neva came back to Major Million's house and placed in his hands the deadly decoy with which Salome the Dark had baited her electric trap.

If it had been otherwise—if Jo had succeeded—the nabob-Vidocq would have been warned.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WHAT THE TRAP CAUGHT.

MAJOR MILLION came home while Jo was tracking Neva to the person who had given her the letter.

Not finding the maid in, the detective examined the camera in the wall, and found there the sweet childish face of Salome's messenger as Jo had succeeded in capturing it.

The city detective studied it some time, wondering why Jo had seen fit to secure it.

The face was strange to him and he was

looking at it for the tenth time when the bell rung.

When he opened the door lo! there was the same face on the step.

Neva had come back.

"I have a letter," said the girl, taking from her bosom Salome's message.

"You've been here before?" queried Major Million, taking the missive from her hand.

"Yes, sir, but you were not in then."

"Why didn't you leave this with the girl?"

"I was not to do so unless you were at home."

The detective glanced at the superscription on the thick white envelope, and then looked over it at the girl.

"Were you to wait, my child?" he asked.

"Yes—for a reply, you mean, don't you?"

The shadow nodded. Neva followed him into the cozy library and dropped into one of the finely cushioned chairs without having been invited to do so.

Major Million cut the envelope with a letter-opener and took out the message.

Neva had become interested in the strange appointments of the room, and seemed to have forgotten where she was.

This was what Major Million read:

"MAJOR MILLION, Esq.:—

"If you are not busy, and would like some information concerning one Mori Cardoni, late of Tuscan, you might be rewarded by calling at No. 696 M—avenue, city, to-day, between six and eight. After this date the undersigned will not be here. Please say 'yes' or 'no' to the child if she presents this to you. MADAM C—."

Major Million found Neva still engaged in a study of the room when he looked up from the bottom of the perplexing note. He could hardly repress a start when he read the name of Mori Cardoni.

It was a name familiar enough to him, for he had followed its owner through a part of one of the most puzzling complications with which he had ever dealt as a detective.

No shadower likes to lose a trail, and to have a quarry slip through one's fingers when one is about to close on the game is the most provoking thing of all.

Mori Cardoni, the Tuscan, had served Major Million just such a trick some six months before the opening of our present story.

He had disappeared in a manner that confused and mystified the New York Vidocq. He had dealt with shrewd rascals before, he had brought them to justice after long chases, but the clever Italian had eluded him at the last moment.

Moreover, his trail after Cardoni had been of the most secret nature. He was not aware that more than three people knew of it. He had nounded the game with the utmost vigilance, but, as it had turned out, all for nothing.

Now, here was a person who wanted to impart some information about the lost prize, and if there was any one thing always near the detective's heart it was final victory in the Cardoni case.

But who was Madam C— and what did she know about Mori Cardoni, the Tuscan assassin? The detective mentally asked himself this question over and over while he went back and read the letter again, making at the same time, a careful study of the chirography.

"Is your mistress very anxious?" he asked calling the child from her inspection of the room.

"Really, I don't know. You see, sir, I don't know what she says in the letter."

"Oh, she doesn't tell you her secrets, then?" smiled Major Million.

"No, indeed. My mistress is very kind but she never goes that far."

The detective seemed to reflect for a moment.

"Tell your mistress that I will probably call about seven."

He glanced at his watch as he spoke and Neva slipped from the chair and prepared to depart.

"Is that all?" she asked.

"That is all. What is your name?"

"Neva."

"Neva who?"

"Just Neva," was the reply, and without being held longer, the girl went away leaving the detective alone in the room.

He walked to the window and drew the curtains apart far enough to see the little messenger as she flitted past.

"Just Neva, eh?" he mused, going back to the table and taking up the letter again. "That means that the child has been trained and is an apt scholar. In the first place, I can think of no woman who could impart any information about Mori Cardoni. Secondly, if the letter be true, the writer is apt to be an Italian herself, for the quarry that slipped through my fingers six months ago associated wholly with people of his native country. Madam C—, is it?" he held the letter before him and studied it again.

All at once he unlocked a drawer in the table and drew forth several bits of paper covered with writing. These he placed on both sides of the letter he had just received and compared them with detective carefulness.

His eye went from one to another and it was some time before he looked up.

"If there is a resemblance it is very faint," said he speaking aloud. "I detect here and there a certain likeness between the letters, but

this often occurs. Besides I am confident that she could not have known of my hunt for Cardoni. I will keep my word, but I am not to be drawn from my present quest by this old trail. I am Mayne Malcolm's authorized avenger and I intend to follow to the bitter end Salome and her gang."

Major Million buttoned the letter beneath his coat and wrote a note for Jo which he placed in the camera or where he knew she would be sure to find it.

Then looking at his watch once more and calculating mentally that he could easily reach Madam C's by seven o'clock he left the house.

Number 696, M—avenue, was in a neighborhood largely inhabited by people of means, and no business connected with crime or criminals had ever called him thither.

Still he was familiar with the locality and thought that he knew the exact location of the house he had been requested to visit.

He had just had an interview with Jupiter Jowl in which he had caused that precious scoundrel's heart to sweep into his throat at mention of Nicholas Malcolm, coupled with a possibility that he was still living. The detective had gained an important point by this interview, and Mr. Jowl was likely to learn that Mr. Tazewell from Jersey was some one else.

If Salome the spider had been on the watch, she might have noticed the well-dressed man who came down the pavement toward her house a few minutes before seven.

Major Million paid but little attention to the dwellings on his left, but when he reached No. 696 he walked up the steps.

The next moment his hand had manipulated the knocker and he had stepped back to wait for the response.

In a little while the door opened and there was little Neva again.

"Ah! I catch you at home do I?" cheerily exclaimed the detective.

"Oh, yes," was the answer, and the door was shut with Major Million in the electric trap.

"Where is your mistress, child?" inquired the nabob ferret.

"You are to wait for her in the parlor to the right," and the child pointed down the hall toward a door. "She will be down in a few moments."

As the detective moved down the corridor, Neva disappeared through a door on the left, bounded across a room, and vanished again beyond it.

Bursting into a room still beyond her last door, she threw a shawl over her head and rushed from the house into the gathering shades of night.

Meantime, Major Million had reached and opened the door on the right.

Beyond it lay a large room, whose appointments were faintly visible in the subdued light that reigned in the apartment. He barely noticed the heavy and dark-colored carpet on the floor, and the keenest eye could not have detected the mat-like net-work of fine wires that lay between him and the table.

Major Million's life hung on a thread as delicate as that of a spider's spinning.

In the room beyond the one on whose threshold he stood, stood a woman with heaving bosom and burning eyes. She was looking into an oval mirror, which by some mechanism of reflection showed her the whole interior of the parlor at her back.

Her left hand rested on a small table, and almost against a black-glazed button. Salome held her breath in suspense, and her white, marble-like face, relieved strikingly by the hot eyes, was reflected ghastly in the mirror.

She saw the detective at the door of the fatal room.

Her finger rose and rested on the electric button.

The fly had come to the web, the fox had jumped at the bait, and she would soon spring the trap.

These thoughts seemed to leave a burning trail behind them in her brain.

She had but to touch the button when Major Million had crossed the step, and there would be a dead sleuth-hound where a living one had just stood.

"Why doesn't he advance?" mentally cried Salome. "I am ready to send the death-current through him. I long to sweep from my path to a cold million the one man in the way. What holds him aloof? Does he— My God! he has stepped back! It can't be that I am discovered at the last moment?"

She fell back from the table and nearly dropped the mirror. The cry on her lips died unuttered.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OUT OF THE WEB.

"Who has warned the man-bound of Gotham? In Heaven's name what has he seen?"

Salome the Dark stood trembling in the middle of the room just beyond the one where she had spread the death-net for the millionaire Vidocq.

She dared not think that at the last moment she had failed—that when one more step would

have settled her enemy's career, some mysterious warning had interfered. No wonder her heart seemed to pulsate in her throat, and it was not strange that the situation almost froze her with terror.

When she looked again the figure of the detective was no nearer the door than before.

She thought to throw the mirror away and fly from the house, but second thought and a new resolve held her back.

"I cannot think that I have lost my prey after I have decoyed him into the trap," she went on. "Will he not change his mind and advance again? The door stands open. I cannot think that he has seen the wires. They are invisible in the light before him. I tried my eyes on them and they could not be seen."

All at once the figure of Major Million came toward the door again and Salome with a quick cry sprang to the table and laid her finger lightly on the electric button.

It was a moment of suspense and anxiety.

Holding the mirror close to her face she watched the city-shadow with bated breath. One more step and the button would sink.

Instead of taking it Major Million leaned against the jamb and complacently folded his arms.

This was a cruel stab and Salome recoiled.

She thought she could detect a cynical smile at the detective's mouth. His head was thrown back and one foot was advanced far enough to cover the step, but it did not touch the wires on the carpet.

"He is waiting for Madam C—," mused Salome watching him closely. "He more than half-suspects that he has walked into a trap. His eyes are sharper than I thought they were. Does he believe that I am at the bottom of this? Well, he will not have the pleasure of seeing Madam C— while he keeps that attitude at the door."

Major Million continued to stand at the threshold of the trap till Salome grew tired of waiting.

"If I thought he drew anything from the girl, I'd follow her and give her a touch of my hands," suddenly cried Salome. "But I have always found Neva faithful, and I don't see why I should mistrust her now. No, something else has entered the detective's head. He surely suspects."

For ten minutes the nabob detective kept his provoking position at the door, then he fell back, and his form grew dim in the hall.

Taking a note-book from his pocket, he wrote hurriedly across the sealed page, using the blank wall as a desk. Salome did not see him at this work.

When he had folded the note, he threw it into the room beyond, and it alighted on the table.

A moment later, he passed the door again and vanished.

The tigress in the next room saw him for another second, and then the shutting of a door told her that the fly which the web had caught had got away.

"Gone! Gone! May Satan take him!" cried the maddened woman, bounding into the trap, and thence across it to one of the heavily-curtained windows. "He is walking away with his brain in full play. Curse him!"

She glared at him through the blinds, with the distended eyes, and the hard breathings of a wild beast. Her clinched hands tore the curtains, and her foot beat the anger of her heart on the floor.

When Salome went back she stooped, and tore up the network of wires, which had failed to send the death current through Major Million's brain.

She went at her work with the fury of a fanatic, but by the time she was through she had cooled down, and was herself once more.

In a little while every vestige of her trap had disappeared, and half an hour later, she opened the front door, and stepped out upon the street.

Night had come again, and the lamps were casting the weird shadows of pedestrians over the stones, upon which a few drops of a cold rain had fallen.

The avenue was not thickly populated at that hour, but the roving glance of Salome the Dark did not see a figure which she could fashion into the Monte Cristo ferret, who, by some mysterious Providence had slipped through her hands.

As a matter of course, she was constantly on the lookout for him.

Salome proceeded some distance, and left the avenue at a point from which she could see the thousands of lights that seemed to terminate at the Battery.

Her head was still full of the detective and his escape from the trap.

She stopped on a corner as if undecided which way to go.

"Can you tell me," suddenly said a voice at her elbow—"Can you tell me, I say, which is the shortest way to Blank street?"

Salome had her eyes on the questioner before the voice had ceased, and the face she saw had already sent a thrill through her nerves.

She was addressed by a woman still young

and good-looking, despite the pale and anxious face she exhibited in the lamplight.

"The way to Blank street, is it?" responded Salome, taking good care—the result of a sudden thought—that the young woman should not see her face in full. "Do you live in the city?"

"I was raised here, but I am bewildered," came the answer.

"I am going down Blank street myself," Salome rejoined.

"Then it is not far from here?"

"Not very."

"Thank Heaven! I was afraid I had wandered far, and, then, I've been away from them too long already."

The keen black eyes of the tigress in satin had recognized the bewildered young woman, though they had never met personally before.

She knew from what Knute Knelson had told her that she had encountered Leone, Killis Kayne's wife. The discovery was enough to send her blood like a lava current through her veins. She would find the Rover. He was the man who had the important paper—the Malcolm will and the statement—and she would step in ahead of Knute and secure them.

"Do you live far down Blank street?" asked Salome, still keeping her face concealed by pretending to shield it from the fine rain which was coming down.

"Not far, madam," replied Leone.

"You do not live alone, I presume?"

"If I did, I would not be so anxious to get back. I was knocked down by a crowd of men who rushed out of a saloon just as I came opposite, and when I started on again I found that I was bewildered. A husband and child are waiting for me at home. My husband is not well."

"What is the matter?"

Salome knew that Knute's bullet had wounded the Rover in his flight from Jupiter Jowl's office, and she was anxious to learn his condition.

"He got hurt," said Leone, taking another look at the face so deftly concealed from her prying eyes. "Some people are unfortunate you know—some must be, in a great city like this."

Before Salome could proceed with her inquiries Leone looked at the buildings on a corner which they had just reached and uttered a familiar cry.

"This is Blank street. I know where I am now! Many thanks for your kindness, madam. I—"

"Don't be in a hurry. I am going down the street, and you may have company all the way."

But Leone drew back like a person suddenly frightened.

At that moment by the merest chance, aided by her quick eyes, she had caught a fair view of Salome's face.

"Never mind, thank you," she ejaculated. "I am in too much of a hurry to suit you; I know I am. Good-night."

The hand of Salome darted out and caught Leone before she could get away. The fingers closed like a vise about the girl's waist and she was drawn forward with the piercing eyes of the queen of the plot riveted upon her.

"Don't be in a hurry, I say," said Salome in low tones full of menace as she bent forward.

"You act like you know me—"

"I do!" interrupted Leone, who had drawn back almost the length of Salome's arm.

"Ha! Well, who am I?"

Killis Kayne's young wife cast a furtive look about her.

As far as she could see no one was near and they stood on the street corner with the rays of the nearest lamp falling over Salome.

But she did not see the statue-like figure that stood a few feet away, a dark addition to a darker tree.

Leone did not answer Salome's last query.

"You heard me?" continued Salome sternly.

"I don't believe you know me at all."

"I've seen you before."

"Where?"

"For one place, in the Park."

"Everybody goes to the Park," smiled Salome.

"That is true."

"Was I alone when you saw me?"

"No."

"You are shooting wildly now," cried the detective's enemy, and then she went toward Leone so suddenly that she fell back again, but she could not escape from the clutch of the siren's hand.

"See here. I know more about you than you want known," Salome went on. "You are now going back to one who is wanted by the police for half a dozen crimes. He was shot on his last venture, which was safe-breaking in the office of a reputable lawyer. You don't want him to be dragged from his bed and locked up in the Tombs. After that comes Sing Sing!"

"My God!" cried Leone throwing up her hand in a gesture of silence.

"You have a right to hate that prison if you love your husband," Salome resumed with hardly a breath between her sentences.

"Don't tell me that I don't love him!" flashed Leone.

"I wouldn't for the world, girl. I'm a woman myself, and in that respect we're all alike. As I've said, you don't want the doors of Sing Sing to open for your husband."

"They shall not!"

"Just as if your hands can keep them closed!" laughed Salome derisively. "I am the person to bar them against his entrance."

"You?"

"Yes."

"I don't understand you."

"I'll make it plain. But one thing can save your husband from the grip of the police, and that is the surrender to me right away of two papers which he holds. Don't start and shake your head. You are Leone and you know what I mean. The papers or Sing Sing! Come! show me where you live."

In the heat of her passion Salome's grasp relaxed a little at Leone's wrist, and the next moment the burglar's wife jerked loose and bounded off like a doe.

Salome, with a cry started in swift pursuit, and the man who stepped out from the tree in the shadow of a house laughed at the chase.

"You'll find Leone too swift for you, my tigress!" he exclaimed.

It was the nabob detective.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SOME STARTLING INFORMATION.

MAJOR MILLION, the sleuth, proved a good prophet in this instance. Leone distanced Salome in a few seconds and vanished down an alley where the queen of the plot did not follow.

"She vanishes like a vapor," exclaimed Salome halting at the dividing line of light and darkness. "If I had not played so bold a hand perhaps I would have won the cast, but now I am at sea and can only go back."

But she did not immediately carry out her thought.

She found an open place where she thought she could safely make inquiries about Leone, but here again she was disappointed.

The person in charge of the little shop knew, or pretended to know, no one who answered to Salome's description of Leone, and the eager woman was obliged to turn back.

Meantime a man who had tracked her to the shop was stowed away in a secluded place outside waiting for her reappearance.

When she came out she was followed at a respectful distance.

Salome went down the somewhat darkened street looking curiously at the houses as if chance would reveal Leone's residence. How she would have rejoiced to have found her escaped bird! She would have dared anything to have spied Leone looking out of some window, or to have seen her with the burglar husband who was probably dying with Knute's bullet in his back.

But Salome was not rewarded for her patience and search.

The man behind could have told her that the papers she wanted were no longer in Killis Kayne's hands. He could also have startled her with the truth about several other matters which just then were involved in some mystery to her.

She did not know that the fox who had come to her trap and who had escaped therefrom was the shadow that moved when she moved and stopped when she stopped. If she had, perhaps there would have been a startling play—something like the spring of a real tiger—on the quiet streets.

Salome was followed with a sleuth-bound's tenacity to a house beyond whose door she disappeared.

Let us follow her.

She stopped in the hall and threw off the cloak and hood which had concealed her face on the street.

As she hung them up she saw a door open a few feet away and a large head framed in an abundance of bushy hair was thrust into view.

"It is I," said Salome, in her usual tone, and in an instant the head vanished.

"My God! she must not see too much!" cried the man, who jumped back from the door with every vestige of color driven from his face as it were by the arrival of the woman in the hall.

He at once began to transfer to his bosom and pockets from the table in the middle of the room a lot of papers.

His hands were nimble and swift, and when Salome opened the door and walked in he had put the last document out of the way and was sitting erect and composed as a tolerably well-frightened person can be.

Salome came forward with her dark eyes fixed on nothing in particular, but at the same time she saw the ashen line at the corners of the man's lips.

"Has Mr. Jowl been here?" asked Salome.

"He has not," replied the big man, who was our old friend Colonel Nolan, whose appearance as Nicholas Malcolm was, according to the woman's planning, near at hand.

"When have you seen him?"

"Not since he was here to consult us."

Colonel Nolan uttered this falsehood with a coolness which he thought did him great credit.

And a most stupendous falsehood it was, too, for he had but lately come from the spider lawyer's den, where he had declared his inten-

tion of withdrawing from the game—an impulse prompted by the cowardice which was a part of his nature.

"The lawyer ought to be here now," continued Salome, glancing at a watch which she plucked from her belt.

Nolan started.

What if Mr. Jowl should drop in and by some unguarded remark reveal the secret of their last interview?

Colonel Nolan feared the woman into whose power he had fallen. He feared the flashings of her dark eyes and the touch of the hands which, silken in texture as they were, had the grip of a giant's.

"Jupiter Jowl always keeps his engagements," answered Nolan, feeling that he must make some reply.

Just then the slight sound fell upon his ear. He was sure some one had stepped upon the stoop from the sidewalk.

A thought flashed through his mind that it might be the lawyer.

"I think I left a letter in the hall," said he, leaving his chair, and the next moment he was in the entrance.

He could not have timed his arrival better for the opening door revealed the well-known figure of Jupiter Jowl.

In a second Nolan caught his hand.

"Not a word about our interview! For Heaven's sake, keep sealed lips. She is in yonder," and he looked toward the room where Salome was alone.

"I'm silence, colonel," rejoined the lawyer-shark, in a whisper. "Let's go in. I guess I'm going to surprise Salome."

The two men entered the room together, and Salome's eyes wandered quickly from the colonel's well-pleased features to the lawyer's, which revealed none of the surprise he had mentioned.

"I've got a bit of news," said Mr. Jowl, taking a seat and crossing his ample legs.

"Real news?" smiled Salome, her eyes growing brilliant, as they always did when she was in good spirits.

"I think so. I have been called to the station-house to see a prisoner confined there."

Colonel Nolan opened his eyes; Salome showed no emotion of any kind.

"You don't seem to think my visit a very important one," resumed Jupiter.

"Pardon me; but you lawyers are often called to such places in the line of business," Salome hastened to say.

Mr. Jowl bowed.

"But this prisoner interests all of us," here he glanced at Colonel Nolan, who leaned forward with an expression of fear already fastening itself on his face.

"Then, of course, you are interesting me," observed Salome.

"Well, to unravel the ball at once, the man in the station-house cell is Knute Knelson."

An exclamation of amazement escaped from Colonel Nolan's throat as his lower jaw dropped. If he had any color before, he could boast of none now.

As for Salome, her dark skin did not change. The only alteration perceptible was the wedding of her lips.

"So he is there?" she spoke, echoing in her own way the lawyer's revelation.

"Yes."

"On what charge?"

"A double one—threats and attempted murder!"

"Is the young doctor the plaintiff?"

"He is not."

Salome now showed some surprise.

"Who makes the charge?" she inquired with more eagerness than she could control spurring her on.

"I'm coming to that," returned Jupiter Jowl. "I'm afraid Mr. Knelson is in a bad box. He came to the station from a house on Blank street where he is charged with attempting to rob one Killis Kayne, known to the police as the Rover."

"Oh," parted Salome's lips. "So he found your burglar and made an attempt to get the papers?"

"It seems so."

"Did he send for you in a legal capacity?" she went on, and before the lawyer could answer she followed up her own words with others:

"Of course you will get him off. Dare the Rover, a thief himself prosecute the case against Knute? I think not."

"But you don't know the determination of the burglar's wife," put in the lawyer.

"Leone?"

"Leone! Knute's play at the house has roused a latent tigress in her nature. Why the man was going to dash their child against the wall, and would have carried out his threat if the young crook, himself dying maybe, had not sprung from the bed and choked him into unconsciousness. Knute thought the threat would secure the documents."

"What did the burglar say?"

"He claimed that the papers have passed beyond his power."

"Do you believe that?"

"I cannot say."

Salome was silent for a second.

"Can you get Knute out of his scrape?" she asked abruptly.

"I will try."

"Is he impatient?"

"He is ugly."

"What! he does not talk, does he?"

"He growls."

"What does he say?" cried Salome, for the first time excited and strangely white at the lips.

"He demands that we get him out before noon to-morrow," answered Jupiter.

"In case of failure or refusal, what?"

"He threatens to sell out the whole game."

Colonel Nolan fell back in his chair with a cry which drew the attention of both Salome and the lawyer to him.

In an instant there snapped in the woman's eyes a stern light not altogether unmingled with a flash of contempt.

She let the terrified colonel off with one look.

"So he will force us to do the impossible, or have his own way!" exclaimed the queen of the plot, turning to the lawyer. "The time has passed for listening to the threats of a caged fool! Where is he?"

Lawyer Jowl gave the desired information in half a dozen words.

"I will see him myself," said Salome in reply.

"The fool's tongue will pronounce his own doom if he is not careful."

"For God's sake, don't get us deeper into the affair!"

In an instant Salome whirled upon Colonel Nolan, who had spoken, and leaned across the table.

"You've got the heart of a hare!" she cried.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE COWARD'S FLIGHT.

THE man at the station was in very ill-humor, and Jupiter Jowl had correctly stated the situation.

Knute Knelson found himself in the clutches of the law, and on a serious charge, which threatened to open for him the doors of a very famous prison.

It took him some time to make up his mind to send for the lawyer-spider of Gotham, and when he did so, the determination was accompanied with a resolve to do some plain talking.

A somewhat stormy interview followed Mr. Jowl's arrival at the station-house. He promised to do what he could for the prisoner, but Knute was not satisfied with this. He wanted no "ifs," but an unconditional promise that he should be taken out of custody within a few hours.

"You know who I was serving when I got into the scrape," he said in a whisper to Jupiter, "and in one respect you are as deep in the mire as I am. You must get me out of here by to-morrow noon, or I'm liable to 'talk.'"

The lawyer's cheeks blanched with fear, but the dim light in the cell helped him to conceal it.

When the interview terminated, a prisoner in the next cage was roused from what appeared to be a drunken stupor by an *attache* of the station, and was led out "for trial."

Knute had barely noticed the man at all. He knew that he had been brought in since the dispatch of the message to Jupiter Jowl, but Knute never dreamed that his next cell-mate was Major Million, the nabob sleuth.

Fortunately for the coward of the game—the renowned Colonel Nolan—Salome had not seen him conceal the papers on the occasion of her visit to his quarters after her unsuccessful attempt to follow Leone home.

He retired up-stairs at the first opportunity, and threw the whole lot into a grate, where they were speedily licked up by the blaze there.

"She's bound to silence Knute Knelson," exclaimed the colonel, looking at the burning documents. "I know what her visit to the station-house means. They'll find a dead man in the cell soon after her departure. Ah! don't I know something about her tricks!"

He crossed the room, and unlocked a walnut cabinet, among whose depths he found a pamphlet, which bore the title: "The Remarkable Trial of the Countess Ugaurdi, for murder, at Pisa, Italy."

"Ah! don't I know her?" continued Colonel Nolan, holding the book before him. "But I don't have to come to this story for my knowledge. I happen to know the countess through a rather close personal acquaintance. They acquitted her in the Italian courts. She was too shrewd for the shrewdest over there. But, never mind. The pitcher is at last found broken at the well, and I don't want to be found among the ruins."

He restored the book to the cabinet, and went below.

The front room was empty, and the lamp burned low.

Salome and Jupiter Jowl had gone away together.

After awhile, Colonel Nolan threw a cloak over his shoulders, and pulled the rim of a felt hat over his eyes.

He left the house with a good deal of stealth, and did not stop till he knocked at a door nearly a mile from his starting-point.

In response to his raps, a bell tinkled in the hall beyond, and the door was opened.

Colonel Nolan stepped inside, and followed a female figure up a flight of creaking stairs.

He was ushered into a room on the second landing, and stood face to face with the presiding genius of the place.

This personage was a woman apparently seventy—a creature with a dark, shriveled, parchment-like skin, back of which burned two little eyes like a serpent's.

Over the back of her chair grinned a human skull, and a skeleton hand appeared at one side of it, as if about to pounce upon the occupant of the seat.

About the room, which was neither large nor tidy, were various appliances of the fortune-teller's art, though the woman in the chair was a true advertisement of her calling.

Colonel Nolan did not seem to be unknown to the woman whose name was displayed on a tablet which swung above the table from the beak of a stuffed owl which had lost one of its glass eyes. That name was:

"MADAM ZAGANO."

The Hercules of the plot looked at the fortune-teller a few moments and then pushed forward his big hand.

"I want to know what you can read in that to-night," said he, glancing up at the seeress.

The woman bent forward, and took the tips of the colonel's fingers in her grasp.

"You'd better not," she remarked with a shake of her head while her eyes scintillated with new brilliance.

"I guess you're right," was the colonel's answer. "Go on."

"What do you want to know?" queried the woman.

"Doesn't your calling tell you?"

Madam Zagano wheeled her chair from the table and took down a book from a shelf within reach.

Nolan watched her closely while she consulted it a few moments, and when she looked up their eyes met.

"You had better not!" repeated Madam Zagano.

Colonel Nolan fell back.

"By Jove! I've been thinking as much!" he exclaimed. "By my soul! this puts an end to the last doubt. I am going to turn my back on the whole thing. I don't want to go to the end with them."

He left his chair and laid his hand on his hat when the uplifted finger of the fortune-teller checked him.

"What is it?" asked the colonel.

A singular smile appeared on the woman's face.

She opened a drawer in the table and took from it a sheet of black paper curiously covered with a jumble of white lines and dots.

"You see how I pass my idle moments," continued Madam Zagano, exhibiting the paper to her visitor. "That is the horoscope of a dead man."

"Cast before death?" asked the colonel with a perceptible shudder.

"Of course," answered the woman. "I received a letter from him asking me to cast the horoscope for him at my leisure. But he never got to see it."

"He died too soon, eh?"

"Yes, death came to Mayne Malcolm a little sooner than he expected him."

The name pronounced by the fortune-teller sent a sudden start through the colonel's frame.

"You can't read this," the woman went on shaking the black chart before Nolan.

"No," was the reply.

She fastened her two black eyes upon it and seemed to study it a few moments.

"Look!" she suddenly cried lifting her eyes to Nolan, while she placed her finger on a particular part of the horoscope. "Where these lines cross his life turned. The evil genius of his existence came upon the scene at this juncture. Mayne Malcolm was born under a star which never yet gave one a peaceful, bloodless death. Here! take the chart and hold it between you and the light."

Colonel Nolan did so, but with some misgivings.

He had to bend his body forward to get a good look, and the paper was held close to Madam Zagano's lamp.

All at once the black hue of the sheet seemed to fade, and in its center grew while the colonel looked, or seemed to do so at any rate, a face whose outlines caused a start.

As true as he lived, the face of Salome was before him, mysteriously stamped in the sheet like a water-mark!

No wonder that the chart nearly dropped from Colonel Nolan's hands.

With a white face and bulging eyes, he looked at Madam Zagano who had watched him with no little triumph.

"What do you think?" asked the woman.

"Whose face is in the paper?"

"Ah! is there a face there?" inquired the woman, taking the chart from the colonel's hands and holding it so that nothing but the white lines on the dark background could be

seen. "Are you sure you saw a face in the sheet?"

"I am. My eyes never deceive me," was the answer.

"Look again."

Nolan took the sheet the second time and again held it between him and the light.

"Is the face there still?"

"Yes, and there is the shadow of one beside it!" cried Nolan throwing the horoscope upon the table. Madam Zagano picked it up and thrust it close to the light.

"So there are two faces," she observed glancing at Nolan, who was breathless and white. "They are the faces of Mayne Malcolm's destroyers."

"Was he destroyed? I thought he—died like other people."

"He died in his chair. Do 'other people' leave the world in this manner?"

Colonel Nolan drew back and stared at Madam Zagano whose fingers were moving the chart back and forth before the lamp.

"I don't see what all this means," he cried. "Mayne Malcolm was too rich for a poor devil like me to have anything to do with."

"But I was merely showing you a bit of my idle hours' work," grinned the woman.

"It is strange, and I can't account for it," responded Nolan.

He drew a gold-piece from his pocket and threw it on the table at one of the woman's skeleton like hands. A sweep of the fingers and the coin disappeared.

"Good-night!" continued Nolan, stepping back.

"You are going away for good," rejoined Madam Zagano looking him in the eye.

"What if I am?"

"You must go far enough."

"I will. Of course you keep the secrets you discover?"

"My motto is 'Silence.'"

Colonel Nolan was at the door.

As he turned to take a parting look at the seeress the remaining eye of the stuffed owl fell out and striking the lamp put it out as effectively as if it had been thrown into a tub of water.

Madam Zagano uttered a cry of affright and fell back from the table, while the colonel wrenched the knob and dashed from the room.

"I'd like to know what infernal magic brought out my face and Salome's in Mayne Malcolm's chart," he exclaimed. "I'm a fool if I stay another minute in the game. I'll get beyond it before Major Million plays his hand—ay, even before Salome visits Knute at the station-house."

He quickened his steps before he was fairly out of the house, but he had not gone a square before he heard a voice behind him and felt a hand laid on his arm.

"Well, what did the old Hecate of the black art tell you about our scheme, colonel?"

The man whirled as if an arrow had pierced him, and the moment he looked, his jaw fell.

Salome stood before him!

CHAPTER XXXI.

TIGRESS AND FOX.

THE dangerous beauty that kindles a tiger's eyes shone in Salome's.

She had evidently tracked Colonel Nolan from the fortune-teller's door; her very look and attitude told him that.

She did not repeat the question with which she had startled the man, but, on the contrary, she looked at him in silence as if she were waiting for an answer.

"I did not expect this pleasure," stammered Nolan.

His last word seemed to draw a smile of derision from Salome.

"Why don't you answer me?" she demanded.

"What did you ask me?"

"You know?"

"Ah, yes; about the—the old fortune witch back yonder?"

Salome's eyes said "yes."

"She didn't tell me much of anything," the colonel went on.

"She didn't read your fortune, then?"

"Not to any extent."

"You sought it?"

"Perhaps I did; but what does all this amount to? You have something to tell me."

"How do you know?"

"Your eyes tell me."

The queen of the plot showed her white teeth in a smile.

"I didn't know my eyes ever betrayed me," said she.

"Not often," he rejoined.

"Yes," answered Salome, taking a long breath. "I have something to tell you. But not here," she quickly added, taking his arm. "Let us walk away. It is important, as you will say when I am done."

They went down the street together, and with silence between them till Salome darted into a small all-night restaurant with private stalls, to which doors were hung.

"Now I have caught the fox!" cried Salome, leaning across the table and startling her companion by her manner.

"You have caught whom?"

"The fox!"

"Do you mean—"

"The nabob sleuth of New York!" finished the woman.

Colonel Nolan dropped back and stared aghast.

"Wasn't it unexpected?" he asked, at length.

"Indeed it was," and Salome's face glowed anew with triumph.

"Tell me about it."

"Over a bottle of wine, eh, colonel?"

"Certainly—over the best to be had," and the waiter was summoned, and a bottle of champagne soon sparkled between the pair.

"When Mr. Jowl and I left the house, we went to his office to transact some business," resumed Salome. "Within a square of it I saw a man pass under a lamp some distance behind us. It was by the merest chance that I discovered him. In a flash I seemed to see something familiar in his shape, and whispered my suspicions to the lawyer. We passed on to the office and entered. Presently, there sounded a foot-step in the hall. It approached the door, and there stopped."

"Was it the spy?" queried the colonel.

"I'll get there directly," smiled Salome.

"We knew, or thought we did, at least, that only a door separated us from the man in our path. Only a door! Just think of it! The lawyer wanted to let him go away without discovering anything, but I was not going to let the bird in the hand go back to the bush. It was an opportunity not to be missed after what has occurred within the last twenty-four hours. I went to the door, which was unlocked, and laid my hand on the knob. The very stillness outside in the darkened hall told me that the foe was there. It seemed to me that I could feel Major Million's breath on my face."

"For several minutes I stood at the door, gathering all my strength, and when I had the full complement at my command, I suddenly opened the portal, and threw myself straight at the figure I found before me! I bore my man clear across the corridor, and against the further wall, and as I pressed him there, the lawyer came to my assistance with his strength and acumen. In less time than I have told this story in, we had the money-Vidocq on the floor in the lighted office, choked into unconsciousness and wholly at our mercy. Ah! it was an unexpected catch, but none the less welcome on that account. To see Major Million there, was worth all the disappointments we have met with so far in the game, and to feel that he would bother us no more, was better still."

"What did you do with the detective?" asked the colonel, with an eagerness which he could not control.

"Do you think we let him go?" laughed Salome, draining the delicate glass, whose stem her fingers had encircled during a part of her narrative.

"I had no such a thought in my head."

"I have just come from the fox," resumed Salome.

"Just come from him?"

"Even so."

Nolan gave her a close look of mingled mystery and surprise.

"I see I have you in the dark," was the continuance. "I now invite you to take a look at the results of our lucky place in the dark corridor."

The big colonel almost dropped the glass he had just raised.

"What! do you tell me that Major Million is still at Jupiter Jowl's office?" he exclaimed.

"Nothing of the kind have I even intimated," rejoined Salome, showing some contempt for the colonel's poor discernment. "I mean just what I've said—nothing more, nothing less. I want to prove that I have the fox in durance by showing you Sir Reynard himself."

"I'm perfectly willing to take you at your word," replied Colonel Nolan, but Salome shook her head.

"There's nothing like seeing," she said with a smile, that was lightened by the sparkle given her eyes by the champagne. "I will not take no from you; don't breathe the word. Come! You've finished your wine, and I am up with you in that respect."

"Is it far?" queried Nolan, pushing his chair back.

"A man in your position ought to be willing to go to the Antipodes to enjoy the treat I have in store for you."

There was no reply to this, and the two passed to the street together.

Salome, full of eagerness and victory, walked rapidly, like a person anxious to reach a certain place within a given time.

Colonel Nolan would have given much to have been elsewhere just then.

The boldness, the deep playing of this woman, were too dangerous for him.

She had caught the city sleuth, and aided by Lawyer Jowl, as unscrupulous a wretch as ever lived, she had followed up her victory by a crime which would involve him, for was he not known as Salome's partner, if not her husband?

He resolved again and again to get out of the net. There was a time when the idea of clutch-

ing Mayne Malcolm's millions by some shrewd playing had a wild fascination for him. But since the man's strange death, and since Dr. Downly's sudden end so soon after his patient's, he shrunk from the consummation of the plot.

Salome did not give him the pleasure of pursuing his thoughts uninterrupted.

They were rapidly approaching a certain place as he could tell by looking into the face he had learned to read so well, and when Salome darted into the mouth of an alley dragging him after her, he felt a cold chill in his veins.

The witch of two worlds opened a door in the dark with a key which she took from her bosom.

"One of the many snug places Lawyer Jowl controls," whispered Salome looking into Colonel Nolan's face as she could see it in the uncertain light.

The following moment they had passed beyond the door and found themselves in a corridor whose sides Nolan could touch with his extended hands.

"This way. There's no danger," said Salome's voice and at the same time a hand found him in the Cimmerian gloom.

At the end of the hall Salome found another door which yielded to the key she inserted.

In the room now entered the woman found a small dark-lantern which she lighted and turned on Colonel Nolan so suddenly that he recoiled.

Salome laughed at her companion's fright.

"The fox awaits us," said she. "If the bull's-eye unstrung your nerves a little more champagne will tone them up. Ah! here we are."

By this time Salome had found another door which opened upon a flight of steps leading downward.

It was like going into the earth to Colonel Nolan as he went down after the fearless woman whose light threw a bright flash ahead.

"What is that strange sound?" suddenly whispered Nolan.

Salome stopped and turned, giving him and the stone wall he was hugging the benefit of the light.

"Ah! you hear it then?" she exclaimed.

"Yes."

Colonel Nolan leaned toward the wall and listened again.

"It is the river," continued Salome abating nothing in coolness.

"It can't be very far off."

"Indeed, it is not. We are now in underground New York. Don't tell me that it is not inhabited. Wait and see."

Nolan straightened and went on again. In spite of his efforts to shut it out he heard the monotonous and sickening swish of the unseen tide.

It struck to his heart a terror it had not known before.

"Heavens! if Salome has consigned the detective to a grave here, then he is surely out of our way," thought he.

The stone-walled corridor down which they were now going seemed to slope toward the lower regions.

By and by the sound of the river was lost, but Nolan felt that it was not far off.

"We are here!" whispered Salome, and the colonel started because her voice was the first sound he had heard for some time.

He looked around bewildered for he saw nothing to indicate that they had reached the end of their journey.

But when the full force of the lantern was shot forward he saw a brick wall which was at the end of the passage. It was solid to within two feet of the ceiling where there was an opening which would have admitted a man's head.

"Here! put your feet in the niches yonder and take the lantern," spoke Salome thrusting the glim into the colonel's hand.

"What then?" whispered Nolan.

"What then?" echoed the woman with a laugh. "Why, throw the light into the cell beyond the wall and inspect its interior."

Colonel Nolan took the light and planted his feet as commanded. Then with one hand he drew himself up to the opening and threw the gleam of the bull's-eye beyond. The next second he fell back with a wild cry.

CHAPTER XXXII.

HOLDING THE SPOILS.

"WHAT do you say now? Did I lie?" exclaimed Salome seizing Colonel Nolan's wrist and gazing with a smile of joy into his blanched face.

The big man's teeth fairly chattered.

"He is there," stammered the colonel in reply.

"Forever there!" echoed Salome. "When the angel comes to touch the forgotten dead he will find the New York fox where you have just seen him. Do you want another look?"

"No, no. I have seen enough."

Salome took from Nolan's grip the bull's-eye which was about to fall from it, and the two started back up the stone walled corridor against whose further sides sounded the monotonous swish of the restless tides.

Not a word was spoken till Salome reached the end of the subterranean way where with her hand on a latch, she turned to the man who had followed in her tracks.

"Did he want to speak?" she inquired.

Nolan started.

"What! I thought the man was dead!" he cried.

"Bless you no, colonel," was the quick retort. "The fox is alive in the trap—alive but as good as dead," she added.

A shudder quivered the lips of the man before Salome who went on:

"You saw the air-hole we left for him? Of course you did, for you had your head in it. That is not all. By turning a bit of brass now within reach of my hand, I can flood this corridor from the river you listened to awhile ago. In an hour the water would reach the air-hole in the wall. You know what would follow."

Nolan made no reply.

"We won't resort to that," resumed Salome.

"The fox is safe enough. Now let us take possession of the fortune that awaits us."

"When?"

"We present the case to-morrow and the day is almost here. To-morrow you appear as Nicholas Malcolm, the only brother of the deceased. There can be no failure. The one great obstacle is out of the way; Killis Kayne is dying, and Leone evidently knows nothing about the missing documents. The new will is furnished."

"The new will?"

"Yes, the one that makes your title clear."

"What will you do with the man at the station-house?"

"Ho! leave him to me," replied Salome. "What else do you want to know before you can dismiss your fears?"

There was a bit of clever sarcasm in the woman's voice, but Colonel Nolan did not seem to notice it.

When he had left the house the location of which he did not fix in his mind he still saw before him the spectacle he had gazed upon in the underground cell.

He saw the man lashed in a heavy, old-fashioned, arm-chair, which seemed to be bolted to the wall behind. The position of the ropes prevented the victim from moving an inch, and with his head forced against the back of the chair and so held that he had to look straight ahead at the opening in the wall, he was immured for life and doomed to die a death the thought of which makes one's blood turn cold.

This was the man who had stepped upon the trail as Mayne Malcolm's avenger—the keen amateur detective of New York, who had picked up link after link in Salome's wake and who at the time of the tiger leap which had caught him was about to close in on the greatest conspiracy ever set on foot for a fortune.

Colonel Nolan had other fears left, notwithstanding Marl Mortiboy's doom, but a glance at Salome warned him to keep them to himself.

In no good humor he returned to the house he had left a short time before, and a few minutes later he was alone.

"To-morrow, is it?" he said to himself. "The coolness of Salome knows no bounds. She ought to succeed; she has succeeded before, but not in this country. I am almost ready to stay and fight it out."

Perhaps Colonel Nolan feared that at the very moment of flight a hand would fall upon him and he would be dragged back again into the vortex.

And by Salome at that!

In this mood at a very late hour he went to bed. His sleep was not disturbed till the next morning, when a hand shook him and he opened his eyes to behold Basil Belfort, the private secretary, at the pillow.

Nolan had not seen the young man for some time, and his presence in the house at that hour opened his eyes to their widest extent at once.

"Get up! I want to congratulate you, but I want to see you in presentable shape first," laughed Basil.

"What has happened?" inquired the colonel, lumbering out of bed and getting into his clothes.

"What you haven't slept in ignorance of the windfall?" was the response. "You saw Salome last night. She told me so."

"I saw her—"

"Then you know what is to take place to-day. You are now Nicholas Malcolm. I congratulate you."

Nolan tried to smile, but it was a sorry attempt. His face was still ghastly, as if sleep had not brought the natural hues back.

"I begin to believe that you don't want to play your part," continued Basil.

"I do. I'm quite ready, sir," said Nolan, thinking of Salome. "I did not feel well when I retired last night, and my nerves are still somewhat unstrung. But I'll be all O. K. in a moment."

He went to a sideboard and drank off a glass of liquor that sent a flush throughout his face.

"What is the first move?" he asked, turning upon Basil.

"A visit to the proper judge accompanied by Jowl," rejoined the private secretary. "He will arrange the particulars when he comes. You see the paper which is in the lawyer's hands acknowledges that you are Nicholas Malcolm, and the court, an old friend of Jowl's, by the way, will let the whole thing pass."

Nolan could not help thinking what an impartial judge a man might be who was accounted a friend of such a rascal as Jupiter Jowl.

Later in the day a carriage drove up to the house and Colonel Nolan entered it to find Jowl and Salome already inside.

"I've got the way prepared," chuckled the lawyer, hitting Nolan on the shoulder, at which tap the man started as if a red-hot iron had fallen there. "You will adhere closely to the story you are to tell, and the papers which I hold will settle the rest of the matter."

A short drive landed the trio at the threshold of a small court-room, the only occupant of which was a sharp-faced, spectacled man who bowed in a dignified manner to the colonel.

Jupiter Jowl introduced his client as Colonel Nolan, whose true name, as he would show by indisputable evidence, was Nicholas Malcolm, the only surviving relative and sole heir of Mayne Malcolm, lately deceased.

Whereupon, watched closely by Salome, Nolan proceeded to tell a singular story of life in two worlds. His fortitude increased as he proceeded.

In the midst of the narrative which, Mr. Jowl knew by heart, for he had helped to compose it, the judge raised a hand and checked Nolan.

"Does a written and lawfully signed statement by the deceased recognize the claimant?" he asked with a look at Jowl.

"Yes, your Honor. I have it here," and a document was taken from the lawyer's package and placed on the desk.

For five minutes not a sound was heard in the room. The little eyes that looked through the spectacles went over the paper word by word. He seemed to dwell some time on the signatures at the bottom.

"I see nothing wrong here," he remarked, folding the paper. "I understand that the young girl who occupied the home of the deceased has disappeared?"

"She has. She went off under a cloud."

"What went with her?—family plate, jewelry or anything of the sort?"

"Not enough to bother with," replied Jupiter Jowl with one of his peculiar looks which the judge seemed to understand.

"You let her go, eh?" queried the man at the desk.

"Yes. It was probably her first offense."

"Or her last one," chuckled the judge.

An hour later all was over, and when the shadows of another night deepened about the city Colonel Nolan had full possession of the house of Mayne Malcolm, and Salome with her eyes full of triumph was laughing over some wine while he had not touched his.

As a matter of course, an event of this kind could not be kept from the busy reporters.

Several called and got Nolan's story in brief while others gathered it from Mr. Jowl's lips.

The late papers gave it generous space, and the new heir heard Salome read the various accounts in a rich voice which, she could not help it, quavered with victory.

In a certain house a long distance from the mansion occupied as we have just described, a young girl was staring at one of the pages of a newspaper. Her face was white, and her eyes were distended by surprise.

"In God's name, how did all this happen?" she exclaimed. "Where is the man who started out as Mayne Malcolm's avenger? Did they buy him off? No, he has millions himself! He hated the very ground the conspirators trod. He was devoted to my cause. But something startling has happened. The compact has won. Salome is fixed in the house where she watched her victim go step by step down the path she made for him. I must know why they were permitted to gain the victory. I don't care for myself. I can get along without a dollar of the Malcolm wealth. But I want justice. The dead must be avenged."

Five minutes thereafter Janet, the speaker, left Mrs. Postlewaite's humble dwelling and for the first time since her flight intrusted herself to the streets.

"No, not to Lorain now, but to the man himself!" she exclaimed. "He knows why this crime has triumphed. Major Million must look me in the eye and confess his inability to punish, or his duplicity, if he has deceived me."

The importance of her errand seemed to lend speed to the girl's limbs, and she was nearly out of breath when she ran up the detective's steps and jerked the bell.

The door was opened by a young woman with a bandage about her forehead.

"Is your master at home?" asked Janet.

"No. I can tell you nothing. I have been at the hospital since yesterday. He has not been here since I went away. I wish you could tell me where he is."

A rush of blood to her head seemed to unnerve Janet. She staggered forward and clutched Jo's arm.

"They have killed him!" she cried.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

JANET'S TRAIL.

JANET would have fallen with this cry on her lips if Major Million's maid had not seized and supported her.

The two girls stood face to face a few seconds, one supporting the other.

"Who have killed him?" broke over Jo's white lips.

"The spinners of the web—the woman who kills mysteriously!"

Jo looked at Janet as if she believed the girl getting rid of her senses.

"If the team had not struck me on the crossing," said she, "I might have sounded a warning which would have baffled them. I tracked home the girl who came with the message."

"You tracked her home?" cried Janet.

"I did."

"Whither did she go?"

Jo drew from her bosom a slip of paper upon which she had carefully written the number of the house to which she had followed the child Neva in hopes of being able to warn the detective of impending danger.

Janet read it and slowly shook her head.

She had no knowledge of the house or of its tenants but thought that they might be investigated to advantage.

"If he has fallen into a trap," resumed she, "they cannot have obtained the priceless documents."

"I do not know."

"For heaven's sake, let us take a look!"

The two girls proceeded to the library and commenced a thorough search of the unlocked drawers that lay open to their hand.

There were places to which they did not have access. In one corner of the room stood a small steel safe which seemed to mock successful search with its strong door.

"I trust they are there," exclaimed Janet pointing to the treasury.

"Ah! do we not?" answered Jo.

Janet went close to the combination-knob and eyed it sharply for awhile.

"I am all in the dark," she remarked coming back to the nabob-Vidocq's maid. "I am no longer afraid of the streets. If I had not lost my loan ticket—yes, if I had even left the metallic box in the niche behind Mayne Malcolm's bed, it might not be so bad now. But I don't know," she added with a sigh. "Let me see the slip again."

Jo produced the paper and Janet made a mental note of its contents.

"I am going to try," spoke she going toward the door.

Jo looked at her like a person in a maze.

"You are going to try what?"

"I shall look for him."

"Alone?"

"Alone."

"The odds are against you."

"I know that."

"If this creature called Salome is half what you have described her, she is hard to match."

"She is the very person I have painted her!" cried Janet with animation. "I have watched her alone with her dying victim. I have seen her pour out his medicine. I want to face her some day in a court of justice. It shall come to that for vengeance—vengeance for the dead—will drag her thither and her end will be night."

Jo stood off and looked at Mayne Malcolm's ward as she uttered these words. Her graceful figure was drawn up to the limit of its true stature and her eyes flashed with honest determination.

"God speed you!" cried the maid. "But beware!"

"Of Salome?"

"Salome and the rest."

"I shall be vigilant," said Janet firmly. "I have seen enough of them all to know some of their characteristics. I have watched Knute the nurse and Basil the secretary—the man who betrayed him at the bitter end."

Janet was once more on the streets and among the lights and shadows of Gotham.

Never did a young girl have such a task on hand.

She had as good as sworn to find Major Million believed to be an occupant of some infamous set and sprung by Salome and her gang. She realized the obstacles that lay in her path—knew the depths to which the conspirators would descend to hold their own, for her sojourn in the dead millionaire's house had given her an insight into the villainy of the five.

Her first objective, after quitting Major Million's house, was her old home.

It was like going back into the mouth of danger, but Janet did not shrink, and in a little while she stood in front of Mayne Malcolm's late property.

Of course the stately mansion had a familiar look. But now the shutters were drawn, and the curtains met beyond them, but for all this a gleam of light met her gaze.

Janet would have given all she possessed of this world's goods to have been at that moment beyond the threshold, and to have seen the victorious conspirators at home.

There was a light in the room where Malcolm in his padded chair had watched the world fade, day by day, with his blood turning to water, despite the science of Dr. Downly.

Was Colonel Nolan the new heir there? Was Salome the Dark—the witch of the plot with him, gloating over the last throw of the cards by which the prize of the drama had been won?

All at once the front door of the mansion opened, and Janet mechanically shrunk into the shadows as she gazed at the person who came out.

It was Salome!

The young girl's heart seemed to sweep into her throat. She had unexpectedly been brought face to face with the tigress of the play. Salome had come forth from the paradise she had won, and stood before her with triumph flashing up in her dark eyes.

It was a thrilling moment in Janet's career.

Salome leaned back in the hall a second, and then shut the door, coming out with a protecting shawl over her head.

Like a specter in black she swept by the watchful girl and passed on.

"To the end, Salome," murmured Janet, speaking through her teeth, which clothed her words in resolution. "Something tells me that you are going to show me a revelation. Is it the trap?"

At times Janet almost lost the velvet-footed tigress, whom she was following through the intricacies of a great city's streets, and trailers less stout-hearted would have relinquished the chase. But she had too much at stake.

On went Salome, unconscious of the fact that she had a swiftly-gliding, graceful figure at her heels, now in the lamplight and anon in shadow.

She led Janet into a part of the city which the young girl had never visited observantly.

True, as Malcolm's word, she had been through it, and the personnel of the building seemed to recall a part of her flight with the box taken from the secret niche.

"We are getting over to the river," said Janet, in a certain quarter. "Does Salome intend to cross and pursue her journey on the other side?"

"No, the witch of the pave had no intention of doing so. She stopped suddenly at a crossing and looked back. Janet thought for a moment that she was discovered, but in a moment she took hope again.

Apparently satisfied with her backward glance, Salome darted on once more, and quickly vanished.

The girl sleuth came up to the alley-street in time to see a figure fade away in darkness against a somber building.

It must be Salome!

In a moment Janet was on the spot, and her eyes enabled her to see a door, the sound of whose closing had just struck in upon her ears.

She had not caught the noise of a pushed bolt nor the click of a key in a lock.

A wild thought flashed through the girl's brain.

Surely the door had not been locked!

She took another step forward and turned the knob without noise.

The door would yield to the slightest push, but Salome was beyond. She might be waiting for her in the darkness with heaving bosom and silken hands. Claws beneath the velvet!—lightnings behind the drooping lashes of jet!

But all this did not deter Janet.

She had followed Salome too far to be turned back now.

There was too much at stake for a closed door to stand unopened between her and the olive-skinned witch from beyond the seas!

Janet opened the door and went in, cautiously, but with a step that meant no retreat.

Perhaps she was not Salome's match physically, but she was not to be turned back on this account.

The interior of the house was dark, but Janet saw ahead the sudden breaking forth of a ray of light and in it stood revealed the figure of the woman she had tracked.

It was seen for a second, and then vanished with the light.

Simultaneously with this vanishment a footstep and the opening of a door fell upon Janet's ear.

She went down the corridor, and found the latch.

Salome had come to the house for a purpose. She had not left the mansion for this deserted building at such an hour for nothing. Of course her journey must be in some way connected with the play for the fortune.

Was she back in the trap which had caught the detective?

Janet followed to a door which, left ajar, disclosed a flight of steps leading apparently into the earth.

Far beyond them danced the flicker of a light which the girl trailer could readily believe was in Salome's hand.

Janet took a step downward, then another and another.

In a moment she was at the bottom of the flight and on solid ground.

Finding a wall of stone at her back, Janet hugged it closely, and watched the gleam ahead.

She saw it rise and fall, like a will-o'-the-wisp.

Suddenly there came leaping along the corridor, a cry that froze the blood in the girl-sleuth's breast.

The next moment, the light came toward her like a darting rocket aflame.

Janet held her breath, and tried to sink bodily into the wall of stone.

Salome was coming toward her up the narrow corridor, on a dead run!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FROM TRAP TO CLUTCH.

"MERCIFUL heavens!" thought the thoroughly alarmed girl, "I am lost now!"

On came the flashing light, and the towering and dreaded form behind it.

In a second, the lantern's rays glancing along the wall, would fall upon the body pressed against it, and then—What might not happen then?

Janet seemed to hold her breath in startled fear. Not a muscle of her lithe figure stirred the slightest. Her gaze was fastened upon the approaching tigress, as if her eyes were cameras adjusted to catch her to a dot.

Salome's footsteps sent a strange sound throughout the corridor.

They came up with Janet just behind the lantern, which, flaring across her for an instant, to her inexpressible relief left her in the dark as before.

It seemed to the girl as if a cyclone terrible to behold in its coming had passed by, leaving her unscathed.

She could not realize her deliverance for several minutes, then as the truth dawned fully upon her mind, she nearly sent forth a cry of joy.

At the end of the corridor where the steps were, the light seemed to go out and Salome vanished.

A door slammed behind her and Janet did not think at the time that the brown fingers escaping beyond it had turned a key in the lock.

She kept her place against the wall until she was herself again, when she groped her way down the corridor to discover if possible the cause of Salome's sudden return.

She brought up against the brick wall as was to be expected, and above her head appeared to be an opening of some magnitude.

There was nothing here for Janet so she made her way back and found the door locked.

Then a new horror took sudden and complete possession of her.

She was in a trap herself!

The darkness by which she was hemmed in was Cimmerian in its nature. She could not see a semblance of the hand which she held close to her face to test it.

Again and again she tried the door, but it was no use. Against her strength it was immovable as the pillars of a temple.

It was not till Janet fell back out of breath and silent from very exhaustion that she heard the noise which on a former occasion had attracted Colonel Nolan.

The river was still at work with its monotonous tides, beating against its unseen barriers like a restless bird beats the inside of its cage in the vain hope of escape.

Janet thought she could tell how near the water was, though she was in the deepest gloom.

Although there were crevices between the stones in the wall no water came through. Somewhere beyond the rock there must be a barrier entirely waterproof.

For more than an hour the girl, thus caught in a trap of her own setting as it were, remained almost motionless in the underground passage.

She could pace to the brick wall and then back to the door like a prisoner testing the exact length of his chain.

"I must get out of here!" exclaimed Janet. "For the sake of the cause in which I am engaged, I must not perish where I am! The dead is unavenged, and justice knows not where to put her hand for the guilty. I must guide that hand. This duty devolves on me and I must therefore get beyond the black trap which caught me without Salome's knowledge."

To speak thus was to go back to the door. It always ended thus.

The portal opened inwardly or from Janet and into the room beyond.

She took the latch in her hand for the twentieth time, but the efforts she put forth were useless.

Janet fell back not with a groan of despair as might have been expected from her, but with a resolution that thrilled her to her soul's depths.

She ran down the dark corridor with her hand thrust out in her front.

When she touched the brick wall she stood on tiptoe and wrenched one of the bricks from the opening above.

Clutching it firmly she went back up the passage and attacked the lower panel of the door with all her power.

She assumed that Salome had left the house, and in fancy saw her figure gliding once more through the streets of New York.

Blow after blow she rained on the panel until the well-burnt battering-ram effected a breach which gave her encouragement.

At last the panel was knocked completely out and Janet drew back and rested.

Ten minutes afterward she forced her body through the aperture she had made and rose erect in a room as dark as the corridor.

She could not tell how long she had been at

work, nor how much time had elapsed since Salome's flight.

She went round the wall of the room she had discovered and found a door.

As she was about to open it a noise that swelled through the house sent a piercing sensation to her heart.

"Of course it took my breath," said a voice which Janet recognized the instant she heard it. "I did not stop to look the second time, but took to my heels. It is the first time I was ever completely dumfounded. But you shall see for yourself."

"I want to see for I can hardly believe it," was the response.

Salome and Jupiter Jowl were in the room with Janet.

The girl believed that she had but to put out her hand to touch them, but she did not try the experiment.

The footsteps that moved across the room went toward the door she had just attacked and all at once the flash of a lantern cut the darkness.

Janet held her breath again.

"Look here! The door has been beaten in!" exclaimed the voice of Salome. "It cannot be that it was done when I was here. I did not see it. The door appeared solid enough when I locked it behind me."

In the silence that followed the breathless girl sleuth could imagine Jupiter Jowl looking upon her work.

"Let's go forward first," continued Salome.

"And study this bit of breakage afterward, eh? Well, go ahead."

The door was unlocked and the light vanished.

Janet was not the person to remain in the cage a moment longer than the limit required for her escape.

She let Salome and the spider-lawyer proceed down the underground corridor where the bull's-eye was painting the dull stones a red hue, and found the door.

This time there was a key in the lock and she did not hesitate to turn it till the bolt shot back.

Then it was the work of a moment to jerk the door open and rush into the street while an ejaculation of triumph sprung from her throat.

She stopped a few feet from the door and looked back at the house.

It was like getting out of a devil's den. She had escaped from a trap and the realization sent her blood leaping through her veins.

Janet was once more under the lamps and breathed the cool night air which presented such a contrast to the atmosphere in the Stygian passage.

She did not know what had frightened Salome at the end of the corridor.

Had she found the space beyond the brick wall empty when she had expected to look in upon a tenant?

Could it be that she (Janet) had discovered the trap which had caught the nabob-Vidocq? Had she been near the detective's tomb without knowing it?

These thoughts as they took possession of her brain, nearly stopped her in the street, and filled her with a desire to go back.

She kept on, however, until, in the act of stepping from the sidewalk at a crossing, she was caught by the arm and whirled half-way round.

In a moment Janet was looking into a face so full of victory that she involuntarily fell back and lost color.

"You do walk out sometimes, eh?" exclaimed the man, who still held her arm as if her recoil threatened escape. "I've lately got out myself."

Janet already had begun to wonder how the speaker had "got out," for she was looking into the face of Knute Knelson whom she had last heard from as being in the station-house on two serious charges.

"Oh, don't look at me as if I'm the walking personification of a miracle," continued Knute with a cool laugh. "I'm out, and that's quite enough for one to know for the present. Which way were you going? Across the street?—back to the little boarding-house, eh?"

Janet made no reply.

Instead of releasing her the fingers of Salome's spy sunk deeper into her arm, and she was walking away under his escort—she knew not whither.

Fortune had deserted her at the last moment, and luck in some manner had declared for the rascal whom she had cause to fear and hate.

Janet permitted Knute Knelson to lead her to a corner which was not on her intended route. There they came rather suddenly upon the statue-like figure of a Herculean policeman, who no more than glanced at them as they came up.

An appeal for help sprung to Janet's lips the moment she saw the cop.

"Not a word!" whispered her captor, bending toward her as if her look had revealed her intention, and in another moment he had whisked her past the policeman and round the corner.

"What are you going to do with me?" demanded the girl, meeting his cool glance with a look of quivering ire.

"Ah! wait and see. I'm playing a little game

of my own now, my city angel, and you're the winning card. I believe you refused to become Mrs. Knelson when you were politely asked to do so. I have not forgotten it. I want the wife as bad as I do the fortune. Both or nothing! Yes, I'm playing a lone hand—quite an independent one, I should say—ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER XXXV. THE EMPTY CHAIR.

If Janet had remained in the old house which had proved an unexpected trap, she would not have fallen into the hands of Knute Knelson, though, on the other hand, she might have been discovered by Salome and Jupiter Jowl, whom she left in the underground passage on a mission of investigation.

She would have seen the lawyer take the dark lantern from Salome's hand and climb up to the opening in the brick wall, beyond which he threw the bull's-eye gleam.

It took but a glance to show Mr. Jowl that the cell beyond was at that moment without a tenant.

For a moment he could not believe the evidence of sight, but a second look convinced him that his eyes had not deceived him.

The chair was there bolted to the wall, as it were, but it had no occupant.

The man who had been there was gone—the trap that once held the nabob sleuth of New York was empty!

"He isn't there!" exclaimed Jupiter Jowl, dropping back and turning to Salome with a face ghostly in its whiteness.

"Of course he isn't," replied the woman, with a grim smile, which did not reassure the lawyer. "He would be where we left him if he was—in the chair, you know."

"Yes, yes."

"The fox has escaped by some means."

"To be sure he has."

Jupiter Jowl looked up at the opening in the wall and seemed to make a mental calculation. It was evident that he was puzzled.

"A man could not quit the trap by that hole without disturbing the bricks," said he. "You see none of them appear to have been moved."

"That is true."

"Well, I'm downed," and Mr. Jowl shook his head.

"This apparent mystery must be fathomed while we are at it," promptly answered Salome. "Make the hole large enough to admit your body. We will get at this the easiest way."

In three minutes the lawyer's hands had enlarged the opening, and with a good deal of agility he drew his body through it and dropped into the cell beyond.

Salome then handed him the lantern, and he began to explore the place.

"The cords have been cut!" he suddenly exclaimed.

"Impossible!" was answered from without.

"It is true, I tell you," persisted Jupiter.

"He had no knife."

"We thought not."

"I know he hadn't."

"Then, who cut the cords?"

There was no reply and Jupiter moved about the little cell with the lantern.

"I've found the exit!" came suddenly from him.

"Where is it?"

"In the wall north of where he sat. It is a hole large enough to admit a man and looks like it had been frequently used."

Salome was astounded.

"I must see it!" cried she.

"Then I must destroy the barrier between us."

"You must."

Beginning at the top the brick wall was soon reduced by the lawyer. Brick after brick was removed until Salome stepped into the trap.

"Yonder!" exclaimed Jupiter pointing to his discovery.

Salome snatched the lantern from him and sprang forward.

The next moment the lawyer-shark saw her on her knees looking into the opening which, as he had said, was large enough to admit a man.

"Some one came to Major Million's rescue!" she cried looking at her waiting companion.

"There's no doubt of it."

"The passageway has been here a long time," she went on.

"It was adroitly concealed by the stones that helped to make up the wall. Who lives in the house next to this on the north?"

"It has been empty as long as this one."

"And the next one?"

Jupiter Jowl was forced to shake his head.

He had gone to the extent of his information.

"The only way to discover something is to follow up the trail," resumed Salome. "We must know what became of the detective after leaving this place. That passage ends somewhere."

"Of course it does."

"Then you must answer the question—where?"

The lawyer would have recoiled from the task set before him by Salome, but he knew her too well to object. He drew his coat and dropped on the ground at the mouth of the opening.

"Have you matches?" asked Salome.

"Plenty of them."

"Then you don't need the lantern."

A moment afterward Jupiter was crawling forward through almost Cimmerian darkness. The ray of light thrown past him by the bull's-eye did not relieve the situation to any helpful extent.

The corridor was narrow and not walled. The atmosphere within it was heavy and foul, but the lawyer gritted his teeth and pushed ahead.

It was like crawling through an old sewer, and Jupiter Jowl, used to fleecing people at his office, did not relish his job.

He proceeded some distance, passing beneath several houses as he calculated, before he brought up against a barrier which impeded further progress.

"At the end, eh?" mentally exclaimed Jupiter. "I thought I was going to crawl across the city, and come out in the river on the other side. This is better than that."

He began to inspect his surroundings.

It did not take him long to discover that there was no opening ahead. But above his roving hands found what plainly was a trap-door.

"Aha!" thought Jupiter. "The person who found Major Million, and rescued him from the death-chair, came from this point."

This was so plain to him that he did not give it a doubt.

Having discovered the trap, he next tried to raise it, but this he was not able to do, as it seemed to be fastened on the upper side.

His only plan was to go back to Salome and report.

The witch of the plot was found waiting with a most anxious countenance.

Jupiter reported.

"I think I made a point coming back," said he, at the end of his story.

"Well?"

"The house where the trap is, is the fifth one from here. I can't be mistaken. I know these city lots pretty well. I deal in real estate, you know. The fifth house, I say. I'll stake my head on it."

"Then let us see who occupies the fifth house."

Jupiter and Salome left the deserted trap, and once more reappeared on the streets.

In a little while, they looked at the fifth house. It appeared deserted; certainly it was dark.

It was not much unlike the one they had just left; indeed, all the houses were similar in build, and all seemed uninhabited.

While the two were inspecting the house, a woman came out, and glided away after a hasty look around.

"Heavens! that is Leone!" exclaimed the lawyer's companion.

"Impossible! She lives on Blank street, with her burglar husband."

"I can't help it. She has just left the fifth house. There is a brotherhood among thieves, and Leone has just come out of a thief's house."

It still seemed impossible to Jupiter Jowl that the figure disappearing up the street was that of the young wife of Killis Kayne.

"What's to be gained by following her?" he inquired.

"Nothing now," answered Salome. "Her appearance here tells me what sort of people found Major Million in the chair. I think we need not further investigate the fifth house, as you call it."

"No. I want to get back. If the detective is at large we must meet him. He will not halt now. What will the colonel say?"

"He must not have a chance to play coward!" cried Salome, her eyes flashing while she spoke.

"He is beginning to play his role pretty well. A hint of our discovery would drive every bit of courage out of his heart. We must keep it from him till we have met and conquered this new difficulty."

It was an excellent idea, and the lawyer eagerly accepted it.

An hour later Salome, with a placid countenance, walked into a room occupied by Colonel Nolan.

The appointments were luxurious, and everything indicated wealth.

"I'm getting fixed in the new life!" laughed the Hercules of the game, the sentence bringing a flush of joy to his face. "I have nearly ceased to see the detective seated in the chair in the cell."

Salome gave a slight start and her late adventure came back with all its force.

"Of course," continued Nolan, "the water can be turned on at any time and the cell flooded."

Salome nodded.

"That's good. I think it should be done soon so as to obliterate all traces, you know," he persisted. "As Jowl has the renting of the premises, he will see that they are not occupied till after a proper time."

The woman bit her lip with rage and covered the distance between the colonel and herself with a single stride.

"Is this to be an everlasting hobby?" she cried, fixing her piercing eyes upon him.

"No, my dear Salome," stammered Nolan, endeavoring to smile as he fell back.

"Then, let us drop it."

"Agreed."

"Has Knute been here since he got out?"

"He has not."

"Where is Basil?"

"I don't know."

Salome drew off and went into an adjoining room, from which she covertly watched Colonel Nolan a little while with a singular smile on her face.

"I could lift him out of his chair with a single sentence," said she to herself. "But we can't afford to shock him in that way. Take your ease, colonel. You've pulled the golden chestnuts out of the fire for us, and you're entitled to a few of them for your cleverness."

She left Nolan to his own reflections and left the house.

Once more on the streets Salome went almost direct to Major Million's house.

Drawing her hood close over her dark face, she walked boldly up the steps and rung.

In an instant there was the sound of feet in the hall beyond the door, and then it was opened.

"Has your master returned since yesterday?" queried Salome when she caught sight of Jo, the detective's maid.

"He has not," was the reply.

Salome drew back.

She could see by the cast of the servant's face in the light that anxiety and doubt had settled deep into her soul.

"I'll come to-morrow," the tigress rejoined.

"I want to see your master. Good-night," and Jo was left on the step while Salome darted away, wondering in the midst of the new mystery what had become of the nabob Vidocq, whose shadow had again within the last few hours fallen across her path.

She felt that she had another battle to fight—that the game was not yet won.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HOW THE FOX GOT OUT.

LET us go back a step along the thread of our story—back to a time which is still fresh in the mind of the reader.

A darker place than the cell beneath the house in charge of Jupiter Jowl for renting purposes it would be difficult to imagine.

It was there that Major Million, the rich sleuth, returned to consciousness after his rough experience with Salome and Jupiter Jowl in the building occupied by the latter. We have heard Salome detail her play which had placed the detective in her power at a moment when he feared nothing of the kind. He had followed the two into the building not expecting that Salome, tigress-like, would turn the tables on him. She had fallen upon him like a thunderbolt, and her strength and the lawyer's had enabled her to complete her victory.

Bound to the heavy chair in the cell at the end of the corridor, Major Million had ample time on hand in which he could reflect on the new peril by which he was confronted.

The last brick had been put in position by the eager trowel of the lawyer-shark directed by Salome, and the footsteps of his enemies with the gleam of the bull's-eye lantern had departed.

He found that he could not move. The cords cut into his flesh and the foul atmosphere of the cramped place was suffocating.

Was it for a doom of this kind that he had followed Salome the poisoner step by step, picking up here and there links of evidence out of which he had expected to create a chain which would bring all the guilty ones to justice?

He had discovered that Salome was the famous Countess Ugaurdi who had escaped death in Italy only by testimony of Dr. Downly who had followed his patient Malcolm by a death equally mysterious.

Lorain the young student had produced two photographs which established her identity beyond question. He (the detective) had the end of the skein in his hand. He could see victory at the close of the game, and with Janet restored to the vast fortune that had tempted the conspirators he could afford to rest on the brightest laurels he had ever won.

It is not to be doubted that Major Million thought all this over while he sat in the darkness bound hand and foot in a chair from which there was no escape.

The first sound that came to him was that brought by Salome when she led Colonel Nolan down the corridor to prove to his satisfaction that the fox was fairly trapped and forever out of harm's way.

After this incident his imprisonment wore away as before.

All at once the detective was roused from the only sleep that had visited his eyes since his walling up. He could not tell how long he had slept, nor what period of time had passed away.

He was startled by hearing a voice in the darkness.

"The stones seemed to have grown together since I was last here," the voice said in tones of impatience.

"Push 'em out, Shady, and let me out of this stench-hole."

A moment later the noise of falling stones at his left greeted the detective's strained ears.

Then he knew that two men were in the cell with him, that they had come through the wall, as it were; but where from and their identity he could only guess.

"Ho! they've walled the place up!" suddenly cried a voice in the darkness. "They've made a cell out o' this end of the passage. What means this, eh, Shady?"

"Strike a match."

These words had hardly been spoken ere a match cracked, and the little flame shot forth.

Major Million held his breath. He knew what an inspection of the place would reveal.

Suddenly he beheld two men staring into his face, with the utmost consternation and surprise depicted on theirs.

The scene was so ludicrous, in spite of its surroundings, that the walled-in detective could not suppress a smile.

"Hang me, Shady, if the fox in the trap isn't the bonanza sleuth who gave Larry so much trouble!" exclaimed the man with the match.

A dark scowl blackened the fierce eyes of the speaker's companion.

"Then, by Jupiter! we'll let 'im die where he is!" he fairly hissed. "Larry, you know, died up the river, and if this man hadn't—"

"There!" broke in the other one, as he lit several bunched matches by the expiring flame of the single one. "We'll see how it is first."

Major Million up to this time had said nothing to the two thieves who had discovered him.

He now spoke.

"I'm the man who helped to track Larry, but neither of you will say that he did not deserve what he got," said he.

"Mebbe not," admitted Larry's friend, in a growling tone. "But we don't like you, all the same."

"Whose work is this?" asked the other crook, eying the ropes that held the nabob Vidocq firmly in the chair.

"The work of old friends, of course," laughed the major.

"They walled you in, eh?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps you don't like to tell the whole truth," remarked the thief, drawing off and looking at the detective closely.

Major Million turned to Larry's professed friend and continued:

"By the way, did you ever pay the lawyer back who gave Larry away?"

The man spoken to came forward with a sudden oath.

"No!"

"Maybe he serves you occasionally."

"That man? By thunder! I would like to choke Jupiter Jowl for the way he treated Larry. Me his client? I'd go to the noose before I'd let that miserable wretch save my life on fair testimony! But what makes you fetch this man up now?"

"I thought you'd like to get even with him."

"I would. Show me a chance."

"Well," said Major Million watching the effect of his words on the man, "my liberty means that rascal's downfall."

"No!"

"It does."

The thief took a knife from his pocket.

"Do you swear this, Major Million?" he asked bending forward.

"I do."

There was no further hesitancy on the part of the man who clutched the glittering knife.

Cut followed cut until the keen amateur sleuth of Gotham stood up free!

"We'll break the wall down for you if you say so!" exclaimed the man who had cut him loose.

"No; let it be," answered the detective. "I prefer to go out the way you came in."

The two men looked at one another and their color changed.

"Don't fear to show me out," resumed the sleuth coming to their relief. "I know my friends in time of need."

"Then out you go with us!"

This unexpected deliverance sent a thrill through the detective's mind. The friends of a criminal whom he once bounded down had come to his rescue, and could afford to turn a closed eye to their own evil doings.

Ten minutes after quitting the death chair the detective stood in a small room whose contents left no doubt in his mind as to the calling of the men who had pried apart the jaws of Salome's trap.

He was about to turn to the door, eager to throw himself upon Salome's trail once more, when there bounded into the room a young woman who fell back with a wild cry on seeing him.

It was Leone!

For a moment the burglar's wife stood white-faced and breathless before the detective, then she flew at him and caught his arm as she cried:

"They did not hold him long! He is free again! Tell me why you told them to let him out?"

Major Million looked at the young wife in mute bewilderment.

"Who is free, Leone?" he inquired.

"The wretch who would have killed Pearl for the papers—Knut Knelson, who was held at the station for attempted murder."

"Out of the station-house?" repeated the detective.

"Free, I say!"

"You have told me news, Leone."

"Then you did not tell them to let him go!"

"No."

"Well, he is with his friends once more, with his hands ready to play another game. My husband will never recover. The shock of Knute Knelson's attempt has finished him. I want to find the wretch. Will you help me?"

"I will, Leone."

The young woman fell back.

"That man is my brother," she went on, pointing to one of the detective's rescuers. "That is why you see me here. Remember, that Leone, who would have saved you from a trap when you stood at its door, wants the man who has made her child an orphan!"

"I will not forget."

Leone left the room almost as suddenly as she entered it, and one of the men said to Major Million:

"Help Leone and you will make a thousand friends."

The detective understood these words, and five minutes later he stood under the stars once more on the most exciting trail of his career.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE EFFECT OF A GLANCE.

THE nabob sleuth of Gotham made his way rapidly to another part of the city where, beyond the threshold of a certain house, he encountered a young man who greeted him with an exclamation of pleasure which was quickly followed by an anxious query.

"What has become of Janet?"

A smile appeared at Major Million's mouth.

"When were you at Mrs. Postlewaite's last?" he inquired.

"I have not been away from there an hour," answered Lorain, the dead doctor's student. "Mrs. Postlewaite knows nothing about her. The girl has quite mysteriously disappeared. I am very anxious."

The young man need not have uttered the last sentence.

He showed his anxiety in the face he presented to the detective.

"If Janet has fallen into the power of the conspirators we will find her by tracking them. As for myself, I have but just escaped from the claws of the tigress, but I am eager to go to work. What have you discovered?"

Major Million glanced toward the testing-table in the middle of the room, for Lorain had conducted him to Doctor Downly's laboratory, where they could talk without fear of listeners.

The young doctor's eyes brightened at the question.

"I have discovered the active principle of two important drugs," said he.

"Well?"

"This," he went on, taking up a small vial containing a light liquid, "contains the agent which sapped Mayne Malcolm's life. Doctor Downly really discovered it before he died, but being in the power of the Italian witch, he dared not counteract its effect. I found among his papers the result of his chemical analysis. It is conclusive, but, one or two points being lacking, I have been compelled to rediscover the real agent of death. I drop the smallest particle of this poison on a cat's tongue, and the animal is dead before I can put it down. But concealed in other liquids it kills gradually, but none the less certain. It had but little concealment when the deft fingers of Salome placed it in Doctor Downly's wine. She wanted to kill quickly then, for she feared that her victim would break away, and give the world the truth. Ah, what a woman she is!"

Lorain was seen to make an effort to control his excitement, and the detective waited for him to go on.

"We can now, I am sure, connect the crime with the criminal," the young man continued. "The Countess Ugaurdi and Salome are identical. Colonel Nolan, her tool, now revels in the possession of wealth which the conspiracy has obtained. The heads of the scheme now occupy the house from where they played their hand with such cool finesse and so heartlessly. I have this to show you. You have not seen it before."

Lorain, as he spoke, took from an inner pocket a daguerreotype, which showed signs of some age.

"Doctor Downly was a collector to some extent. He had a little cabinet of pictures in his bedroom. I went through it last night and found this one."

Major Million took the portrait, and examined it attentively by the light.

"Do you recognize it?" asked Lorain.

"Not exactly. It seems to me that it resembles a gentleman well known to both of us."

"What is your guess?"

"I think I see in the portrait the face of Colonel Nolan."

Lorain broke out in a light laugh.

"You have hit it exactly!" he cried.

"It is the colonel then?"

"Yes."

"Look on the back of the plate."

The detective did so, and found scratched there as with the point of a knife-blade the figures:

"1848."

"That," resumed Lorain bending forward, "that is the portrait of a man who in the year seen on the tin committed a crime for which he can yet be hanged. Nearly forty years have passed and time has changed the big duffer who now smokes in Malcolm's parlors with his feet on the tables. He wasn't Naseby Nolan then; oh, no! A bit of newspaper which Doctor Downly kept with the picture—old and yellow as it is—tells me that he was then Luke Lorimer. Since '48 he has traveled much—for his health, you know," added Lorain smiling. "But now, emboldened by the fortune which he saw within reach, he comes to the front—bigger than he was then in stature, but otherwise the same man wanted by the dead sleuths of that day."

The New York detective continued to look at the portrait a while longer.

"Can I keep this?" he asked, holding it up to Lorain.

"It is yours."

Major Million put it away with an air of supreme satisfaction, then with the young doctor for a breathless listener he told the story of his adventures, from the moment of Salome's leap from Jupiter Jowl's door to his deliverance from the underground cell by the two thieves.

"If they discover your absence won't the birds take flight?" asked Lorain anxiously.

"No fears of that while Salome leads the fight," was the reply. "She will never leave the prize they have hooked as long as she can fight me. Nothing frightens—nothing daunts her."

"But the colonel?"

"It is ten chances to one that she does not tell him. She knows the secret cowardice of her partner. Salome will not tell him that I am loose, but she will now play a covert though merciless hand against me. It is the last hand she can hold and no one knows this better than the Italian tigress herself."

The detective's eyes lit up with triumph as he finished.

"I must get back to the trail," he cried, springing to his feet. "Knut Knelson has been released from the station by a bit of stupidity which sometimes characterizes the management of affairs there. Let it go. He will have more than me on his track. Leone is looking for him with the keenness and fury of a whelp-robbed leopardess. She will fly at the young villain on sight, and my word for it, Lorain, my boy, that she holds him more securely than the law has done. The Rover will never crack any more safes nor pick another pocket. Knute finished him by his visit to the house after the two papers as surely as if his bullet had found the young burglar's heart."

Major Million buttoned his coat to his chin and was followed to the hall below by Lorain.

"Make sure of them all," said he. "Though Doctor Downly was not my father—I being a waif picked up by him on the sea of life—I loved him all the same. Caught in a net by Salome in Italy and rebound with her cords of crime in this country, he was not the guilty man you may think him. He was in the net of this dark-faced tigress whose secret poisons have cleared her pathway to more than one fortune, squandered and lost in a whirlpool of wickedness. I want them all. Justice demands the whole gang."

"Justice shall not be disappointed!"

The tireless detective stood on the street once more, with the shadows and the lamplight around him.

Not far away, as if watching no one in particular, stood a figure well concealed by the shadow of a building.

For some time the eyes of this watcher had been on Dr. Downly's house. With the patience of a thorough spy the espial had been maintained for more than an hour.

When Major Million moved away the watcher moved also. His step was light and noiseless.

The city ferret did not appear to have the slightest knowledge of this piece of secret business.

"In God's name, how did the fox get out?" the detective's tracker asked himself in audible tones.

"I am in luck to-night though I don't do much of this sort of work. I did not expect to find Major Million here. I was trying to find out what the young doctor is up to. This, however, is a bit of real luck. Ha, ha! I will beat Salome as a watcher if she does not look to her laurels."

The man at Major Million's heels was no less a personage than Mr. Jupiter Jowl.

No, Jupiter did not often play spy. His role was wolf, and he operated generally in his den fleeing all the lambs that came to it, and playing robber under the guise of the law to absolute perfection.

His heart gave a great leap into his throat when he caught sight of Major Million.

He had made a discovery which he felt would result in rich returns. Salome had failed to find the sleuth since his strange escape from the death-chair, and she was now abroad looking for him.

But he—Jupiter—he was the finder of the diamond. Why not go ahead and make sure of it as a surprise to the woman with the dark skin?

He followed the detective several squares in direction of his home.

Was he going back?

All at once Jowl halted and gave vent to a quick cry.

A woman had crossed his path—crossed it like a rocket, and now she was standing a few feet away gazing at the fitting figure of Major Million the sleuth.

The specter was Salome, and the lawyer thought he could see her very veins swell with excitement.

Suddenly she started after the detective.

"There's a knife in her hand! The blood of a tiger is in her veins!" cried the lawyer. "She must not strike him on the street!"

He darted after Salome with a spring and coming up to her, he seized her wrist and jerked her back.

All the hate and fury of a lifetime seemed to flash up in the woman's eyes.

"Don't detain me!" she exclaimed. "Don't you see that I have found the fox who got out of the trap? The Park is just ahead. He is bound to enter and the shadows will screen me. I hold in my hand something as deadly as my old weapon. One blow, swift and silent, and no more traps and trails! Let me go, I say!"

Salome drew back and broke from the lawyer's grip.

"Keep off!" she hissed. "It is now or never!" and the next moment she whirled and darted toward the little Park whose outer boundary the detective had just crossed.

"By Jove! I don't know whether I want her for a wife or not," murmured Mr. Jowl, as both Salome and Major Million disappeared, the shadows of the Park completely hiding them.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

LEONE FINDS HER PREY.

THE sight of the New York detective entering the shadows of the little Square or Park, was to Salome the Dark what the escape of a wounded doe is to a tiger.

She was far beyond the restraining clutch of Jupiter Jowl's hand before he had heard the last sound of her voice.

The two—Salome and Major Million—vanished like balls thrown from light into darkness, and Jupiter, not wishing to be near the scene of the tragedy which he believed was inevitable, turned back and hurried away.

But Salome found herself beaten, for when she reached a spot where she expected to encounter the nabob Vidocq, she saw no sign of her enemy.

The woman seemed to gasp for breath in her rage. She searched the surrounding landscape, nearly all of which was in shadow, as best she could, but her man was gone.

She leaned forward in her eagerness and peered into the darker places, her hands clinched at her sides and a light full of fury in her eyes.

It did not seem possible that the detective could have vanished so quickly. Certainly no one had warned him.

Salome stood awhile longer on the spot of her discomfiture, and then went back.

"He could not wait for me!" she murmured, finding the lawyer gone. "Deep in his bosom is a heart like Colonel Nolan owns. It plays coward when one needs it most. I'll twist the spider's neck for this desertion!"

Major Million had escaped an attack, and possibly a dagger in the back, by the most natural device.

The cracking of a twig on the ground—a sound which Salome in her eagerness did not hear—had warned him. He turned to see the figure of the woman cross the last bar of light between him and the sidewalk just left.

In an instant he knew who was on his track.

Stepping aside into the protecting shadows of a clump of trees which had not lost their leaves he saw the Italian tigress rush past.

A moment later she had stopped and was looking for him.

"Ah! I could manacle you where you stand," thought the detective gazing at her while she beat the vicinity with her sharp eyes. "I see the blade that lies along your arm. You don't know how it shines in the light of yon lamp. Have you abandoned the vial for the knife, Salome?"

She came back past him cheated out of her prey and disappointed.

It was gall to Salome the Dark.

Watching her figure till it vanished down the street, Major Million kept on across the Park and lost himself in the network of byways beyond.

As to the woman she came out in a street, most brilliantly lighted and kept it for some time.

"Well, I'll show him what it is to check me when I have victory in my hands," she exclaimed looking up at a window beyond whose curtains shone a bright light.

Dodging into an open hallway she ran up a dark flight of steps and opened a door a short distance from the top.

"Hol! You? What did you do?" exclaimed the man whom she surprised in a small room which had the appearance of a lawyer's den.

Salome made no reply but came forward and took a chair at the table where Jupiter Jowl sat.

"What did you do it for?" parted her lips.

"Did I do anything?" stammered the bewildered rogue who saw the clouds of the coming storm in her flashing eyes.

"You held me back!"

Jupiter realized the truth in a moment.

Salome had lost the detective.

"I didn't want you to meet him there. I—"

"Oh, your heart played coward just as the colonel's does!" she interrupted. "Now he will turn on us with all his acumen and rage."

"He will give you another opportunity."

"When?" demanded Salome.

"You must be on the watch and seize it when it comes."

"When it comes? yes, yes!" laughed the woman; looking at Jupiter all the time as though she wanted to fly across the table and seize the Adam's apple in his throat.

"What, don't you think it will come?" asked the lawyer.

"When you don't interfere any longer it may," she answered.

"Then I won't halt you again."

A smile appeared on Salome's face. For the first time Jupiter took hope and got new breath.

"Colonel Nolan suspects," she suddenly said.

"Suspects what?"

"That everything is not serene. The man is a miserable coward at heart like—"

She came within one of saying "like you," but checked herself in time and added "like some other people."

Jupiter Jowl said nothing.

"A glimpse of Major Million whom he saw last in the chair in the cell would be enough to throw him on his knees and bring forth a confession. Of late the shadow of the old affair frightens him."

"He ought to feel easy on that score. Nearly forty years have passed—"

"He is always on the alert for the steps of the old sleuths who tracked then just as if they were still on the trail. Colonel Nolan looks twenty years younger than he is, thanks to several little secrets of my own. That is why he has fooled the hounds of justice. But just let some one call him Luke Lorimer unexpectedly, and he will tumble from his chair like a person shot."

Salome laughed at her own words and the lawyer followed.

"We can't afford to play such a trick on the colonel," said he.

"He's an arrant coward!" cried Salome.

"I'll admit that he isn't as brave as Hercules," was the response. "Let's go back to the man we have to outwit."

"I'm going back to him now!"

Salome pushed back her chair and left the table with two brilliant eyes above ashen cheeks.

"A wonderful woman," thought Jowl looking up at her. "I think I can afford to risk matrimony with her after all."

"You heard me, eh?" cried Salome bending suddenly toward him. "I'm going back to him now!"

"Do you think you can find him?"

"When did I ever lose any one longer than for a short spell?"

"You never did."

"And I never will!"

"A remarkable woman," ejaculated Lawyer Jowl, when once more he found himself alone in the little office. "The Malcolm fortune is practically in her hands now, for Colonel Nolan can be scared out of his share whenever we want it."

Mr. Jowl went to his sideboard and helped himself to a bumper of brandy which had the effect of brightening the color of his cheeks and sending his blood like sparks of fire through his veins.

All at once he heard a noise like the fall of a body somewhere in the building, and then while he listened with his head poked into the hall he distinguished a woman's voice.

"I tell you that he's the villain who has orphaned my babe!" said the voice. "You don't think I'd choke an innocent man, do you? I've been hunting for the wretch ever since he got out of the station-house through some crooked scheme, and just as he was about to go up the steps, I caught him."

"Why, you've killed the man, woman!" said a harsher voice.

"I did it with my hands then, for, before God, I had no other weapon. But I don't regret it! I said I would follow him till I paid him back. I swore to do it over the dead body of my husband!"

It was apparent to Jupiter Jowl that quite a crowd had congregated at the foot of the stair and on the pavement beyond.

The voice of the woman was strange to him,

but her words had given him a guess at the truth.

He did not go below to investigate, but quietly closed the door and went back into his den.

He had made up his mind that when everything was quiet he would steal below and get at the truth. But he was released from this promised duty by the sudden entrance of Basil Belfort, the private secretary.

"Well, she got him for it, eh, Jowl?" exclaimed the young man, coming forward with a grin.

"Got who?" cried the lawyer, falling back in his chair.

"Why, Knute. The Rover's wife—Leone, they call her—caught him in the hall downstairs, and nearly choked him to death. He's gone to the hospital in a bad way; her fingers having torn his throat as an eagle's talons would have done."

"My God!" shuddered Jupiter.

"It's rough on Knute, that's a fact," continued Basil. "She says she wants to clutch another throat."

"Ah! Does she intimate?"

"I should say she does," and Basil laughed at the ghastliness of the face before him. "She says there's a lawyer in the case—"

Jowl threw up his hand.

"Where is this female tiger, Basil?" he asked.

"They took her to the station. Shall I keep track of her?"

"I wish you would."

In another moment the Janus Jupiter was alone once more.

"I don't want my throat slit in that manner," he cried. "By Jove! I know what I'll do. I'll get Salome to watch the burglar's wife with me. If I can only keep her off a few days, I'll have her locked up for good."

He went to the door, and after a careful survey of the hall walked out.

As he stepped upon the sidewalk he ran plump into the arms of a man who held him fast.

"This is luck!" exclaimed the person thus met, and the lawyer felt the voice thrill him like a knock of doom. "Do you want to go back up stairs, Mr. Jowl?"

"I want to know what this means?" he demanded.

"It means that I am closing in. I have just come from Colonel Nolan's house. The old coward jumped out of his chair when I called him Luke Lorimer—"

Jupiter's teeth chattered.

"And Salome?"

"Oh, we will have her by daylight. You belong to the gang, I believe. We've got the whole plot at our finger ends."

The lawyer said no more for he was in the grip of the Magnate Detective.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE END OF THE SKEIN.

A FEW minutes before Jowl's unlucky meeting with the man of trails Colonel Nolan was seated alone in the splendid library he had acquired by his part in the deep and desperate game for a fortune.

There was on his face the most complacent smile he had enjoyed for some time, for as yet the news of Major Million's escape from the death-chair had not reached his ears.

Suddenly the bell in the hall sounded in a manner that interrupted the colonel's reveries.

Quick footsteps of the new servant followed the ring and Nolan removed his cigar long enough to issue orders for the visitor to be admitted to the library without the formality of a card.

The following moment a man with a pair of goggles astride his nose came in and bowed.

Whether or not Nolan had heard of the goggles who had called on his confederate, Jowl, with a cock-and-bull story concerning Nicholas Malcolm's sojourn in Jersey, he greeted his visitor with an impertinent stare, and the longer he looked the more uneasy he grew.

The man in goggles came forward, and dropped into the chair directly in front of the colonel.

"You expect an explanation of this visit," said the gentleman, in a rasping tone. "My dear sir, you shall have it! I have called to inquire if Mr. Luke Lorimer has forgotten the occurrences of thirty-two years ago."

The change that came over Colonel Nolan's face was something startling.

He fell back from the stranger as if his breath was laden with pestilence. His lower jaw seemed to drop with a singular noise, and his eyes appeared to bulge out beyond the lashes. Of course his face got white.

"Ah!" continued the man with goggles, with the refinement of cruelty, "I see the colonel carries an excellent memory."

"I don't understand," stammered Nolan, his words and manner giving the lie to his retort.

"Come, come!" laughed the caller. "I thought I spoke good English, colonel. If I did not, I may do a little better."

At the same time, the speaker's hand went up to his face, and as the goggles were pulled down another cry of surprise leaped from the horrified man.

Major Million sat before him.

"The devil is loose!" flashed across Nolan's mind. "We can't outwit this hound, with two millions and nine lives to back him. He's more than a match for Salome with all her arts. I was a fool not to jump the game when I had a chance. But, I let the prize and her infernal eyes keep me to the work. It's all up now."

Colonel Nolan, still looking at the detective, who was eying him with that satisfaction which a person in his situation can afford to enjoy, left his chair, and threw a hasty glance toward a desk at one side of the room.

"No, colonel! Sit down!" ordered Major Million, coolly. "No getting out of the play at this stage. The jig is up. You are at the end of the string."

The hand of the detective encircled the giant's wrist, and his eye seemed to transfix the guilty Hercules like an arrow.

"For what am I held?" asked Nolan.

"For the last crime—for the desperate play for Malcolm's millions, as well as for the death of the man who went, inch by inch, toward the grave, watched by the Italian tigress!"

"Where is she?"

"Never mind," answered the detective, evasively.

"Is she caught?"

"The manacles won't miss her, colonel."

He staggered to his chair, and Major Million released his hand as he sunk into it.

"Take me away! No! let me remain if she is to come. I want one clutch at her throat," he cried.

The rage of a lifetime was concentrated, as it were, in Nolan's words. If Salome had entered the room at that moment there would have been a new tragedy.

But, Salome did not come, and the Hercules of the drama went away with Major Million.

The delectable Jowl could not repress a smile when he saw marching past his cage at the station, the burly figure of the dupe of the witch of two continents.

Colonel Nolan leaned toward the lawyer's diamond and hissed:

"I could choke you, too, you miserable law lizard!"

It is not improbable that Jupiter, at that moment, thanked his stars that some good iron bars were between him and the man he had helped to ruin.

"Where is Colonel Nolan?" asked Salome, bursting into the Malcolm mansion between darkness and dawn, after the two arrests, and confronting the servant in the passage.

"He went off with a gentleman," was the reply.

"With a gentleman?—at this time of night?" exclaimed Salome.

"Yes'm."

"Who was the gentleman?"

The maid shook her head.

"What did he look like?"

"He wore goggles."

"When he came?"

"No, when he went away."

Salome seemed to fall back a step.

She knew about the man in goggles who had called on Jowl.

A few moments later she looked into the vacant library, then she slowly ascended the stair to an upper room, the door of which she locked behind her.

As she opened a dressing-case and took out a chased goblet with a fragile stem she heard the bell below.

In a second she was at the door, which she held ajar while she listened.

There was a man's voice in the hall.

"I don't like to disturb her," the servant said, as if in response to the caller's demand. "She's just retired—"

"I'll go up and see her myself."

The door shut and the bolt snapped, and Salome, with a feverish fire in her baleful eyes, sprang to the dresser.

Her face was white—marble-like—her veins seemed to have lost their blood.

In a minute there were feet on the stair; they came up and stopped at her door.

A hand rapped lightly; then a second rap, with a little more emphasis.

There was no answer.

Outside stood the well-knit figure of Major Million, the Magnate Vidocq.

He looked at the door; stepped back three paces and then—the door fell before him and he landed beyond the threshold.

"You thought to keep me out?" he laughed triumphantly, at the woman who met him, seated in a chair, a haughty smile lingering at her white lips. "You discover, Salome, that I always win in the end; that—"

He leaned toward the Italian tigress and took up the nearest hand. The touch startled him!

"Beaten, by the eternal!" he exclaimed as he drew back and gazed.

There was no mistaking the meaning of the look and the set face before him.

Major Million was at the end of the game but Salome the Dark was dead!

The lees of the wine glass told the story of the

rounding up of her life. She had played to the last the heartless cards of the merciless poisoner!

The day after these several events, Knute Knelson, suffering at the hospital from the clutch of Leone's fingers, confessed his complicity in Janet's disappearance, and the young girl was soon released.

As a matter of course she came into possession of Mayne Malcolm's millions and then, for the first time, the world knew that she was the dead millionaire's daughter. The true will and statement for which the conspirators had struggled so hard, and risked so much, made all this plain, even to Malcolm's reasons for not recognizing her during his natural life.

In the course of time Janet became Lorain Downy's wife, and the old mansion was bright again.

Leone and Pearl, the burglar's wife and child, fought their way through the world to a better station, while the doors of Sing Sing opened to take in all the desperate gang with the exception of the beautiful tigress who greeted the detective in his hour of triumph—dead!

Major Million and Jo, in her French cap, still inhabit the house on the avenue, and the hand that never fails to catch is often busy.

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Colored Cousins. A Colloquy. For two males.

Dime Dialogues, No. 8.

The Fairy School. For a number of girls.
The Enrolling Officer. For three girls and two boys.
The Base-ball Enthusiast. For three boys.
The Girl of the Period. For three girls.
The Fowl Rebellion. For two males and one female.
Slow but Sure. For several males and two females.
Caudle's Velocipede. For one male and one female.
The Figures. For several small children.
The Trial of Peter Sloper. For seven boys.
Getting a Photograph. For males and females.
The Society for General Improvement. For girls.
A Nobleman in Disguise. Three girls and six boys.
Great Expectations. For two boys.
Playing School. For five females and four males.
Clothes for the Heathen. For 1 male and 1 female.
A Hard Case. For three boys.
Ghosts. For ten females and one male.

Dime Dialogues, No. 9.

Advertising for Help. For a number of females.
America to England, Greeting. For two boys.
The Old and the New. For 4 females and 1 male.
Choice of Trades. For twelve little boys.
The Lap-Dog. For two females.
The Victim. For four females and one male.
The Duelist. For two boys.
The True Philosophy. For females and males.
A Good Education. For two females.
The Law of Human Kindness. For two females.
Spoiled Children. For a mixed school.
Brutus and Cassius.
Coriolanus and Aufidius.
The New Scholar. For a number of girls.
The Self-made Man. For three males.
The May Queen (No. 2). For a school.
Mrs. Lackland's Economy. For 4 boys and 3 girls.
Should Women be Given the Ballot? For boys.

Dime Dialogues, No. 10.

Mrs. Mark Twain's Shoe. For 1 male and 1 female.
The Old Flag. School Festival. For three boys.
The Court of Folly. For many girls.
Great Lives. For six boys and six girls.
Scandal. For numerous males and females.
The Light of Love. For two boys.
The Flower Children. For twelve girls.
The Deaf Uncle. For three boys.
A Discussion. For two boys.
The Rehearsal. For a school.
The True Way. For three boys and one girl.
A Practical Life Lesson. For three girls.
The Monk and the Soldier. For two boys.
1776-1876. School Festival. For two girls.
Lord Dundreary's Visit. For 2 males and 2 females.
Witches in the Cream. For 3 girls and 3 boys.
Frenchman. Charade. Numerous characters.
The Hardscrabble Meeting. For ten males.

Dime Dialogues, No. 11.

Appearances are very Deceitful. For six boys.
The Conundrum Family. For male and female.
Curing Betsy. For three males and four females.
Jack and the Beanstalk. For five characters.
The Way to Do it and Not to Do it. For three females.
How to Become Healthy. For 1 male and 1 female.
The Only True Life. For two girls.
Classic Colloquies. For two boys.
I. Gustavus Vasa and Cristiern.
II. Tamerlane and Bajazet.
Fashionable Dissipation. For two little girls.
A School Charade. For two boys and two girls.
Jean Ingelow's "Songs of Seven." For seven girls.
A Debate. For four boys.
Ragged Dick's Lesson. For three boys.
School Charade, with Tableau.
A Very Questionable Story. For two boys.
A Sell. For three males.
The Real Gentleman. For two boys.

Dime Dialogues, No. 12.

Yankee Assurance. For several characters.
Boarders Wanted. For several characters.
When I was Young. For two girls.
The Most Precious Heritage. For two boys.
The Double Cure. For two males and four females.
The Flower-garden Fairies. For five little girls.
Jemima's Novel. For three males and two females.
Beware of the Widows. For three girls.
A Family not to Pattern After. For ten characters.
How to Man-age. An acting charade.
The Vacation Escapade. For four boys and teacher.
That Naughty Boy. For 3 females and 1 male.

Mad-cap. An acting charade.
All is not Gold that Glitters. Acting proverb.
Sic Transit Gloria Mundi. Acting charade.

Dime Dialogues, No. 13.

Two O'clock in the Morning. For three males.
An Indignation Meeting. For several females.
Before and Behind the Scenes. Several characters.
The Noblest Boy. A number of boys and teacher.
Blue Beard. A Dress Piece. For girls and boys.
Not so Bad as it Seems. For several characters.
A Curbstone Moral. For two males and female.
Sense vs. Sentiment. For Parlor and Exhibition.
Worth, not Wealth. For four boys and a teacher.
No such Word as Fail. For several males.
The Sleeping Beauty. For a school.
An Innocent Intrigue. Two males and a female.
Old Nabby, the Fortune-teller. For three girls.
Boy-talk. For several little boys.
Mother is Dead. For several little girls.
A Practical Illustration. For two boys and girl.

Dime Dialogues, No. 14.

Mrs. Jonas Jones. For three gents and two ladies.
The Born Genius. For four gents.
More than One Listener. For four gents and lady.
Who on Airth is He? For three girls.
The Right not to be a Pauper. For two boys.
Woman Nature Will Out. For a girls' school.
Benedict and Bachelor. For two boys.
The Cost of a Dress. For five persons.
The Surprise Party. For six little girls.
A Practical Demonstration. For three boys.
Refinement. Acting charade. Several characters.
Conscience the Arbiter. For lady and gent.
How to Make Mothers Happy. For two girls.
A Conclusive Argument. For two boy speakers.
A Woman's Blindness. For three girls.
Rum's Work. (Temperance). For four gents.
The Fatal Mistake. For two young ladies.
Eyes and Nose. For one gent and one lady.
Retribution. For a number of boys.

Dime Dialogues, No. 15.

The Fairies' Escapade. Numerous characters.
A Poet's Perplexities. For six gentlemen.
A Home Cure. For two ladies and one gent.
The Good there is in Each. A number of boys.
Gentleman or Monkey. For two boys.
The Little Philosopher. For two little girls.
Aunt Polly's Lesson. For four ladies.
A Wind-fall. Acting Charade. For a number.
Will it Pay? For two boys.
The Heir-at-law. For numerous males.
Don't Believe What You Hear. For three ladies.
A Safety Rule. For three ladies.
The Chief's Resolve. Extract. For two males.
Testing her Friends. For several characters.
The Foreigner's Troubles. For two ladies.
The Cat Without an Owner. Several characters.
Natural Selection. For three gentlemen.

Dime Dialogues, No. 16.

Polly Ann. For four ladies and one gentleman.
The Meeting of the Winds. For a school.
The Good They Did. For six ladies.
The Boy Who Wins. For six gentlemen.
Good-by Day. A Colloquy. For three girls.
The Sick Well Man. For three boys.
The Investigating Committee. For nine ladies.
A "Corner" in Rogues. For four boys.
The Imps of the Trunk Room. For five girls.
The Boasters. A Colloquy. For two little girls.
Kitty's Funeral. For several little girls.
Stratagem. Charade. For several characters.
Testing Her Scholars. For numerous scholars.
The World is What We Make It. For two girls.
The Old and the New. For gentleman and lady.

Dime Dialogues, No. 17.

LITTLE FOLKS' SPEECHES AND DIALOGUES.

To be Happy You Must be Good. For two little girls and one boy.
Evanescence Glory. For a bevy of boys.
The Little Peacemaker. For two little girls.
What Parts Friends. For two little girls.
Martha Washington Tea Party. For five little girls in old-time costume.
The Evil There is in it. For two young boys.
Wise and Foolish Little Girl. For two girls.
A Child's Inquiries. For small child and teacher.
The Cooking Club. For two girls and others.
How to do it. For two boys.
A Hundred Years to Come. For boy and girl.
Don't Trust Faces. For several small boys.
Above the Skies. For two small girls.
The True Heroism. For three little boys.
Give Us Little Boys a Chance; The Story of the Plum Pudding; I'll Be a Man; A Little Girl's Rights Speech; Johnny's Opinions of Grandmother; The Boasting Hen; He Knows the Rest; A Small Boy's View of Corns; Robby's Sermon; Nobody's Child; Nutting at Grandpa Gray's; Little Boy's View of How Columbus Discovered America; Little Girl's View; Little Boy's Speech on Time; A Little Boy's Pocket; The Midnight Murder; Robby Rob's Second Sermon; How the Baby Came; A Boy's Observations; The New Slate; A Mother's Love; The Greenin' Glory; Baby Lulu; Josh Billings on the Bumble-bee; Wren, Alligator; Died Yesterday; The Chicken's Mistake; The Hair Apparent; Deliver Us from Evil; Don't Want to be Good; Only a Drunken Fellow; The Two Little Robins; Be Slow to Condemn; A Nonsense Tale; Little Boy's Declaration; A Child's Desire; Bogus; The Goblin Cat; Rub-a-dub; Calumny; Little Chatterbox; Where are They? A Boy's View; The Twenty Frogs; Going to School; A Morning Bath; The Girl of Dundee; A Fancy; In the Sunlight; The New-laid Egg; The Little Musician; Idle Ben; Pottery-man.

The Dime Dialogues.

Dime Dialogues, No. 18.

Fairy Wishes. Several characters, male and female.
No Rose Without a Thorn. Two males, one female.
Too Greedy by Half. For three males.
One Good Turn Deserves Another. For six ladies.
Courtship Melinda. For three boys and one lady.
The New Scholar. For several boys.
The Little Intercessor. For four ladies.
Antecedents. For three gentlemen and three ladies.
Give a Dog a Bad Name. For four gentlemen.
Spring-Time Wishes. For six little girls.
Lost Charlie; or, the Gipsy's Revenge. For numerous characters.
A Little Tramp. For three little boys.
Hard Times. For two gentlemen and four ladies.
The Lesson Well Worth Learning. For two males and two females.

Dime Dialogues, No. 19.

An Awful Mystery. For two females and two males.
Contentment. For five little boys.
Who are the Saints? For three young girls.
California Uncle. For 3 males and 3 females.
Be Kind to the Poor. A little folks' play.
How People are Insured. A "duet."
Mayor. Acting Charade. For four characters.
The Smoke Fiend. For four boys.
A Kindergarten Dialogue. For a Christmas Festival.
Personated by seven characters.
The Use of Study. For three girls.
The Refined Simpletons. For four ladies.
Remember Benson. For three males.
Modern Education. Three males and one female.
Mad With Too Much Lore. For three males.
The Fairy's Warning. Dress Piece. For two girls.
Aunt Eunice's Experiment. For several.
The Mysterious G. G. For 2 females and 1 male.
We'll Mortgage the Farm. For 1 male and 2 females.
An Old-Fashioned Duet.
The Auction. For numerous characters.

Dime Dialogues, No. 20.

The Wrong Man. For three males and three females.
Afternoon Calls. For two little girls.
Ned's Present. For four boys.
Judge Not. For teacher and several scholars.
Telling Dreams. For four little folks.
Saved by Love. For two boys.
Mistaken Identity. For two males and three females.
Couldn't Read English. For three males, one female.
A Little Vesuvius. For six little girls.
"Sold." For three boys.
An Air Castle. For five males and three females.
City Manners and Country Hearts. 3 girls and 1 boy.
The Silly Dispute. For two girls and teacher.
Not One There! For four male characters.
Foot-print. For numerous characters.
Keeping Boarders. For two females and three males.
A Cure for Good. For one lady and two gentlemen.
The Credulous Wise-Acre. For two males.

Dime Dialogues, No. 21.

A Successful Donation Party. For several.
Out of Debt Out of Danger. For three males and three females.
Little Red Riding Hood. For two children.
How She Made Him Propose. A duet.
The House on the Hill. For four females.
Evidence enough. For two males.
Worth and Wealth. For four females.
Waterfall. For several.
Mark Hastings' Return. For four males.
Cinderella. For several children.
Too Much for Aunt Matilda. For three females.
Wit against Wile. For three females and one male.
A Sudden Recovery. For three males.
The Double Stratagem. For four females.
Counting Chickens Before They were Hatched. For four males.

Dime Dialogues, No. 22.

The Dark Cupid. For 3 Gentlemen and 2 ladies.
That Ne'er-do-Well. Two males and two females.
High Art. For two girls.
Strange Adventures. For two boys.
The King's Supper. For four girls.
A Practical Exemplification. For two boys.
Titania's Banquet. For a number of girls.
Monsieur Thiers in America. For four boys.
Doxy's Diplomacy. For three females, etc.
A Frenchman. For two ladies and one gentleman.
Boys Will Be Boys. For two boys and one girl.
A Rainy Day. For three young ladies.
God Is Love. For a number of scholars.
The Way He Managed. For two males, two females.
Fandango. For various characters.
The Little Doctor. For two tiny girls.
A Sweet Revenge. For four boys.
A May Day. For three little girls.
From The Sublime to The Ridiculous. For 14 males.
Heart Not Face. For five boys.

Dime Dialogues, No. 23.

Rhoda Hunt's Remedy. For three females, one male.
Hans Schmidt's Recommend. For two males.
Cheery and Grumble. For two little boys.
The Phantom Doughnuts. For six females.
Does it Pay? For six males.
Company Manners and Home Impoliteness. For two males, two females and two children.
The Glad Days. For two little boys.
Unfortunate Mr. Brown. For one male, six females.
The Real cost. For two girls.
A Bear Garden. For three males and two females.
The Busy Bees. For four little girls.
Checkmate. For numerous characters.
School-Time. For two little girls.
Death Scene. Two principal characters and adjuncts.
Dross and Gold. Several characters, male and female.
Confound Miller. For three males and two females.
Ignorance vs. Justice. For eleven males.
Pedants All. For four males.

Dime Dialogues, No. 24.

The Goddess of Liberty. For nine young ladies.
The Three Graces. For three little girls.
The Music Director. For seven males.
A Strange Secret. For three girls.
An Unjust Man. For four males.

The Shop Girl's Victory. For 1 male and 3 females.
The Psychometiser. For 2 gentlemen and 2 ladies.
Mean Is No Word For It. For four ladies.
Whimsical. A number of characters of both sexes.
Blessed Are the Peace-makers. Seven young girls.
The Six Brave Men. For six boys.
Have You Heard the News? A gossip's catastrophe.
The True Queen. A colloquy in verse. 2 young girls.
A Slight Mistake. For 4 males, 1 female, etc.
Lazy and Busy. A dialogue in rhyme. 10 little fellows.
The Old and the Young. 1 gentleman and 1 little girl.
That Postal Card. For 3 ladies and 1 gentleman.
Mother Goose and Her Household. A whole school fancy dress dialogue and travestie.

Dime Dialogues, No. 25.

The Societies of the Delectables and Les Miserables.
For two ladies and two gentlemen.
What Each Would Have. For six little boys and teacher.
Sunshine Through the Clouds. For four ladies.
The Friend in Need. For four males.
The Hours. For twelve little girls.
In Doors and Out. For five little boys.
Dingbats. For one female and three males.
The Pound of Flesh. For three boys.
Beware of the Peddlers. For seven mixed characters.
Good Words. For a number of boys.
A Friend. For a number of little girls.
The True Use of Wealth. For a whole school.
Gamester. For numerous characters.
Put Yourself in His Place. For two boys.
Little Wise Heads. For four little girls.
The Regenerators. For five boys.
Crabtree's Wooing. For several characters.
Integrity the Basis of All Success. For two males.
A Crooked Way Made Straight. Gentleman and lady.
How to "Break In" Young Hearts. For two ladies and one gentleman.

Dime Dialogues, No. 26.

Poor Cousins. For three ladies and two gentlemen.
Mountains and Mole-hills. For 6 ladies and spectators.
A Test That Did Not Fail. For six boys.
Two Ways of Seeing Things. For two little girls.
Don't Count Your Chickens Before They Are Hatched. For four ladies and a boy.
All is Fair in Love and War. 3 ladies & 2 gentlemen.
How Uncle Josh Got Rid of the Legacy. For two males, with several transformations.
The Lesson of Mercy. For two very small girls.
Practice What You Preach. For four ladies.
Politician. For numerous characters.
The Canvassing Agent. For 2 males and 2 females.
Grub. For two males.
A Slight Scare. For 3 females and 1 male.
Embodied Sunshine. For three young ladies.
How Jim Peters Died. For two males.

Dime Dialogues, No. 27.

Patsey O'Dowd's Campaign. 3 males and 1 female.
Hasty Inferences Not Always Just. Numerous boys.
Discontented Annie. For several girls.
A Double Surprise. For four males and one female.
What Was It? For five ladies.
What Will Cure Them. For a lady and two boys.
Independent. For numerous characters.
Each Season the Best. For four boys.
Tried and Found Wanting. For several males.
The Street Girl's Good Angel. 2 ladies & 2 little girls.
A Boy's Plot. For several characters.
"That Ungrateful Little Nigger." For two males.
If I Had the Money. For three little girls.
Appearances Are Deceitful. Several ladies & 1 gent.
Love's Protest. For two little girls.
An Enforced Cure. For several characters.
Those Who Preach and those Who Perform. 3 males.
A Gentle Conquest. For two young girls.

Dime Dialogues, No. 28.

A Test that Told. For six ladies and two gents.
Organizing a Debating Society. For four boys.
The Awakening. For four little girls.
The Rebuke Proper. For 3 gentlemen and 2 ladies.
Exorcising an Evil Spirit. For six ladies.
Both Sides of the Fence. For four males.
The Spirits of the Wood. For two troupes of girls.
No Room for the Drone. For three little boys.
Arm-chair. For numerous characters.
Measure for Measure. For four girls.
Saved by a Dream. For two males and two females.
An Infalible Sign. For four boys.
A good Use for money. For six little girls.
An Agreeable Profession. For several characters.

Dime Dialogues, No. 29.

Who Shall Have the Dictionary? For six males and two females.
The Test of Bravery. For four boys and teacher.
Fortune's Wheel. For four males.
The Little Aesthetes. For six little girls.
The Yes and No of Smoke. For three little boys.
No References. For six gentlemen and three ladies.
An Amazing Good Boy. One male and one female.
What a Visitation Did. For several ladies.
Simple Simon. For four little boys.
The Red Light. For four males, two females, etc.
The Sweetest Thought. For four little girls.
The Inhuman Monster. For 6 ladies and 1 gentleman.
Three Little Pools. For four small boys.
Beware of the Dog! For 3 ladies and 3 "Dodgers."
Bethlehem. For a Sunday-School Class Exhibition.
Joe Hunt's Hunt. For two boys and two girls.
Rags. For six males.

Dime Dialogues, No. 30.

Invisible Heroes. For five young ladies.
A "Colored" Lecture. For four males.
Wishes. For five little boys.
Look at Home. For three little girls.
Fisherman's Luck. For two males and three females.
Why He Didn't Hire Him. For several characters.
A Fortunate Mistake. For six young ladies, etc.
An Alphabetical Menagerie. For a whole school.
The Higher Education. For eight boys.
The Vicissitudes of a Milliner. For six females.
Cat and Dog. For two little ones.
The Aesthete Cured. For 2 ladies and 3 gentlemen.
Jim Broderick's Lesson. For two boys.

The Other Side of the Story. For five females.
The Test that Told. For five males.
Wooing by Proxy. For 2 ladies and 3 gentlemen.
Learning from Evil. For five boys.
The Teacher's Ruse. For ten boys and three girls.
Colloquy of Nations. For eleven personators.
Additional Personations for "Goddess of Liberty."
A scenic piece in Dialogues No. 24.

Dime Dialogues, No. 31.

Barr's Boarders. For various characters.
A Lively Afternoon. For six males.
A New Mother Hubbard. For six little girls.
Bread on the Waters. For four females.
Fornist the Scientists. For two males.
Slooman's Angel. For two males and one female.
What Each Would Do. For six little girls.
Twenty Dollars a Lesson. For eleven males.
Aunt Betsey's Ruse. For 3 females and 1 male.
The Disconcerted Supernaturalist. For one male and audience "voices."
Grandma Grumbleton's Protest. For a "grandma" and several girl grandchildren.
Nothing Like Training. For a number of males.
The Bubble. For two little girls.
Medicine for Rheumatiz. For two "cullud pussons."
That Book Agent! For three males and one female.
The Well Taught Lesson. For five little boys.
A Turn of the Tide. For 3 males and 3 females.
A True Carpet-Bagger. For three females.
Applied Metaphysics. For six males.
What Humphrey Did. For 5 males and 3 females.

Dime Dialogues, No. 32.

A Persecuted Man. For various characters.
Too Curious for Comfort. For 2 males and 2 females.
Under False Guise. Several females and children.
A Sure Guide. For seven males.
The Eight Little Boys from Nonsense Land.
How They See the World. For five little girls.
The Doctor's Office. For several characters male and female.
Too Much Side Show. For a number of boys.
How Mrs. Ponderous Was Paid. For 4 young ladies.
Polywog Versus Wolypog. For numerous citizens.
Tongue and Temper. For two ladies.
Flour of the Family. For 3 ladies and 1 gentleman.
Middleton's Mistake. For five males.
A Valuable Neighbor. For one lady and one boy.
The Man of Cheek. For two males.
Mr. and Mrs. Blizzard at Home. For man and wife.
Morgan's Money. For five males.
The Courtship of Miles Standish. School Festival.

Dime Dialogues, No. 33.

The Wrong Trunk. For several male characters and one female.
Saucy Jack Lee. For four males and four females.
The Pretty Preacher. For two young ladies.
A Contrast. For two little girls.
Only Joe. For five ladies and one gentleman.
The Tables Turned. For several males.
Why Did You Do It? For a school of little children.
She Had Him Three. For 1 lady and 1 gentleman.
A Report of the Affair. For two gentlemen.
Mrs. Arnold's Misconception. For two gentlemen and three ladies.
The Year 'Round. For twelve impersonators.
Defending the Castle. For 2 males and 2 females.
A Perfectly Veracious Man. For 1 male and 1 female.
Sympathetic Sympathy. For 3 males and 2 females.
Ananias at Home. For one male and three females.
The Man from Bangor. 1 gentleman and 3 ladies.
Casablanca in Two Versions. For two boys.

Dime Dialogues, No. 34.

It's English You Know. For three (or six) males and eight females.
A Much Misunderstood Man. For one male and one female.
The Glass Man. For seven males.
Mrs. Podberry's Views on Education. For two females and several children, girls.
How She Managed Him. For one male, one female, and child.
The Oyster Resurrection. For two males and two females.
A Neighborly Quarrel. For two males.
Blessed are the Pure in Heart. For four females.
What the Boys Knew of It. For a school—all males.
A Warm Reception. For 2 males and 2 females.
Supposings. For ten little girls.
When I Grow up to be a Man. For six little boys.
Enforcing a Moral. For three or four males and several females.
Blaying Big Folks. For several children.
What Are Little Girls Good For? For 9 little girls.
The Bump-Scientist's Reception in Clarionville Center. For 8 males, or 7 males and 1 female.
More Than She Bargained For. For three females and one male.

Dime Dialogues, No. 35.

In the Wrong House. For 2 males and 2 females.
The Sham of It All. For 3 females and 1 male.
The Surest Proof. For several males and one female.
Too Much for Jones and Smith. For two males.
Naughty Boy Blue. For Mother Goose and several children.
Only a Working Girl. For 4 females and 2 males.
How He Got Even with His Enemy. For two males.
Mrs. Bigson's Victory. For one male and one female.
The Mysterious Boarder. For 3 females and 2 males.
The Mugwump Sisters. For a number of females.
Dolly Madison's Method. For 2 males and 1 female.
Miss Lighthouse in the Country. For one male and one female.
The Cruel King. For seven little boys.
Shoddy and Wool. For five males and six females.
The Best Profession of All. For four little girls and one grown person.
Florence Elton's Mistake. For 2 males and 1 female.
The Bewitched Music-Box. For two males.

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The Dime Speakers.

Dime School Speaker, No. 13.

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"It Might Have Been,"
Don't Strike a Man When
Down,
On Keeping at It,
Treasures of the Deep,
Keep Cool,
The Precious Freight,
A Sketch,
Sword the True Arbiter,
Aristocracy,
Baron Grimalkin's Death
Obed Snipkins,
A Catastrophe,
Cheerfulness,
Mountains,
Last Lay of the Minstrel,
The Unlucky Lovers,
The Dread Secret,
Civil Service Reform,

The True Gentleman,
The Tragic Pa,
SABBATH-SCHOOL PIECES.
A Cry for Life,
The Sabbath,
Gnarled Lives,
A Good Life,
To Whom Shall We Give
Thanks?
Resolution,
Never Mind,
The Bible,
Christianity Our Bul-
wark,
The Want of the Hour,
The Midnight Train,
The Better View,
Do Thy Little—Do it Well
Jesus Forever,
The Heart,
The World,
Beautiful Thoughts,
A Picture of Life,
Be True to Yourself,
Young Man,
Time is Passing,
The Gospel of Autumn,
Speak Not Harshly,
Courage,
The Eternal Hymn,
Live for Good,
The Silent City.

Dime Ludicrous Speaker, No. 14.

Courting,
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The Closing Year,
The Maniac's Defense,
The Hen Scratches,
Ass and the Violinist,
Views of Married Life,
Bachelors and Flirts,
Job's Turkey,
A Hardshell Sermon,
My First Knife,
Der Loddery Dicket,
A Canni-Ballad,
Woman's Rights,
What's the Matter,
Mrs. Jones's Pirate,
De Goose,
Touch of the Sublime,
Blooded Van Snoozle,
Blast Against Tobacco,
Tobacco Boys,
Big Geniuses,
My First Cigar,
Terrible T-tale,
Silver Wedding,
Prohibition,

Unlucky,
Queer People,
Biting One's Nose Off,
Golden Rules,
The Singular Man,
Fourth of July Oration,
Cheer Up,
Self-Esteem,
Buckwheat Cakes,
Twain's Little Boy,
A Word with You,
A Chemical Lament,
The Candy-Pulling,
Contentment,
On Courting,
On Laughing,
The Tanner Boy,
On Wimmen's Rights,
The Healer,
The Criminal Lawyer,
Ballad of Matilda Jane,
Water,
The Ballad of a Baker,
Good for Something,
A Moving Sermon.

Karl Pretzel's Komikal Speaker No. 15

Schandal,
Don'd Been Afraid,
Gamboling,
Indemembrance,
Gretchen und Me go Ond,
Hope. Das ish vat it ish,
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